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ALLAN BRECK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SUBALTERN," "COUNTRY CURATE," &c.

——This man's brow, like to a title page,
Foretells the nature of a tragic volume.—SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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It will be in the reader's recollection, that about fifteen or sixteen years ago, there prevailed, at least in Scotland, an intense curiosity on the subject of the insurrection of 1745; an event to which the attention of all classes had been forcibly turned by the recent appearance of the novel of "Waverley." Impressed with a conviction that there were on record a thousand important facts which the prudence or wounded feelings of those concerned had hitherto induced them to suppress, the public began, as in such cases the public is apt to do, to clamour for information; and the secret drawers and decaying memories of all who were supposed to stand in any degree related to the actors in the drama, were forthwith ransacked for the purpose of appeasing the ferment. With what success these researches were carried on by one at least out of the many individuals who embarked in them, it is not necessary for me to say; because Mr. Chalmers's History of the Rebellion is confessedly among the most attractive of the works which have issued, of late years, from the Edinburgh press.

A variety of causes led me, among others, to pry a little, at the period just specified, into the mysteries of *the eighteenth* century. Of these curiosity—the

fashionable curiosity of the day—might be one; family associations were certainly another; but by the most influential was the intimacy which I had b so fortunate as to form with an old lady, to whom insurrection was not a thing of tradition. My ven ble friend had seen the Prince march at the hea the clans into Edinburgh; though very young, she attended his court at Holyrood House; and her re lection of all that passed there—of the persons, dresses, the tempers, and the expectations of his p cipal adherents was vivid in the extreme. It is that she could rarely be induced to converse on subject, and that when she did her feelings soon o came her, because the memory of sad scenes that lowed the suppression of the attempt recurred to with a degree of bitterness which it was very distr ing to witness. But even the rapid sketches w from time to time she gave, sufficed deeply to inte the sympathies of one who had never been taug consider even mistaken loyalty as a crime, or the votion of life and property to the advancement good cause, as the act of a political enthusiast.

When "Waverley" appeared, and the search al alluded to began, I ventured to solicit from the in question any such document as she might have served, illustrative of any stage in the progress o Rebellion. She freely gave to me what she had, serving, that though abundantly voluminous, she afraid they were not of a nature to be of much u the historian. "There's ane among them, inde

added she, "that ought to tell mony secrets, for he that wrote it was conversant with all the outs and ins of the affair; but whether or no he has ta'en the trouble to note doon what he kent, atweel I canna tell. I ne'er had the heart to read his memoir; for, in truth, my dear, I saw ower muckle to gar my heart bleed at the moment to think of opening the wounds afresh, after lang years of peace had skinned them over. But as I said before, if Parson Neil liket, nae man could better describe both the beginning and ending of that unhappy business."

I carried the MSS. away with me, but the hurry and bustle of active life interfered to prevent my inspecting them, and they lay for many years untouched in the box to which they had been originally committed. It is probable, indeed, that they would have remained there for ever, had not circumstances drawn me, a short time ago, into a district of the Highlands, where, to my great surprise, I found that the memory of Parson Neil was still cherished and revered. In a moment my thoughts reverted to the Culloden papers, and I began, as was natural, to institute inquiries into the private history of one who had been represented to me as contributing largely to their value. But the information communicated, though curious in the extreme, was not such as I expected to receive; while I determined, as soon as a fitting opportunity should occur, to seek for more in a quarter where every thing tended to produce a persuasion that I should not seek in vain.

I returned home in due time, and ere the
curiosity could subside, began a careful ex
into that portion of the contents of the bo
claimed to have Parson Neil as its author.

The damp had somewhat eaten into his le
here and there his writing had become too fa
deciphered; but I soon saw enough to con
that his was no narrative of the Rebellion.
contrary, he seemed studiously to have avoid
ing any light upon the great political events
he had been an actor, confining himself stric
adventures of individuals, some of which ap
wild and so extravagant, as to exceed, in m
the case, the bounds of probability. But while
ed, the traditions to which I had listened in
Highlands recurred to me, and I was compe
ceive as facts, details which would have do
credit to the imagination of Mrs. Radcl
"These are too curious to be lost," thoug
me see whether from them, assisted by no
the spot, something may not be manufac
sooner said than done. The materials w
me; I had but to mould them into shape
duced a tale, of which, however wild
the most startling portions claim to
matters of history. That tale I now of
fidence, to the public.

May, 1833.

ALLAN BRECK.

CHAPTER I.

NG the farther shore of one of those salt water lochs,
s of the sea, by which the west coast of Scotland is
ntly indented, lies a tract of country, which some half
n centuries ago became, by right of conquest, the pro-
of Alister Mac Diarmid and his warlike followers.
strict in question, though not wanting in straths and
consists principally of mountain ranges which fall
point both of altitude and [illegible] grandeur, to none
hout the compass of the Highlands. Towards the
f the loch, indeed, hill seems to have been piled upon
some extraordinary convulsion of nature; rocks tow-
igh into the air, without a blade of grass or a slip of
r to cover them; while here and there, from some reft
ice in their foundation, a mountain ash juts forth, as
he purpose of proving how little soil is required in
urishment of that hardy plant. As you descend in the
on of the Irish channel, however, new and varied
y me[illegible] at every step. A narrow path along the
n of the water, now shooting strait onwards with the
on of an arrow's flight, now twisting and turning, as
ays and creeks pierce into the hill's side, opens out
ime to time, glimpses of a panorama, to convey any
te idea of which the power of language is wholly in-
ite. On your left rise sheer and abrupt mountains,
hose rocky and precipitous summits the snow has sel-
isappeared; though to the extent of more than half
ltitude; a luxuriant coat of turf overspreads them,
ully diversified by the feathery plumage of a low and

scraggy underwood. On your right the broad and deep loch, with its islands and promontories, seems, in spite of the ebb and flow of the tide, to repose within a giant basin; around which, on every side, mountains close in, peaked and pyramidal, or broad, jagged, and ponderous. The whole scene, indeed, exhibits Nature in her wildest and most magnificent aspect; for there is not a feature in it that fails to carry the imagination back to the time when chaos first began to give place to order throughout the world.

The stranger who visits this Alpine district in the year 1833, will discover in it more to attract his notice than nature unassisted could produce. The shores of the loch re-echo to the voices of an industrious population, while its surface is from time to time whitened with the sails of numerous boats and vessels of a larger size. Numerous farm-houses, too, scattered through the glens, with a village spread over the base of the hill, give proof that the spirit of enterprise has been here producing its customary result—an increase of comforts; whether purchased at too high a price, it is not for us to determine. But at the period to which our present history has reference, a widely different state of things prevailed. No village was then in existence, nor were the open spaces covered, as they are now, with marks of human industry. It seemed on the contrary, as if war had lately ravaged the district, of which the effects were still to be traced in ruined homesteads, and cottages filled with the earth; while the perfect solitude that prevailed in every direction, led to the unavoidable conclusion, that the inhabitants had removed from their ancient homes in search of some more secure retreat elsewhere.

From the head of the loch, to a remarkable promontory, which giving a new direction to the tide, confers a new name upon the sheet of water, there is a space of, perhaps, some fifteen or twenty miles. Throughout the whole of that interval there were but two spots, and these far apart, from which, in the year 1745, a wreath of smoke was ever seen to ascend; in such quantities at least as could lead to the conclusion that there the rites of hospitality were exercised. Upon the promontory itself, or rather upon a sort of table-land, which almost at its extreme edge overhangs the sea, stood a solitary edifice, which like many other objects of human admiration, though strikingly beautiful at a distance, lost somewhat of its claim to be admired when examined more narrowly. Built without any regard to regularity of architecture, and little attention to comfort, it neither partook of the character of a fortilesa, nor resembled what in

southern phraseology is termed a gentleman's seat; but might pass for the residence of a substantial yeoman, did Scotland boast of such a personage, or to speak in terms more accordant to the condition of things north of the Tweed, as the house of the steward or factor on the estate of a person of consequence. The house in question could boast of two stories in height; the walls were very white; and the windows, small and dreary, were stuck here and there, with a thorough contempt for regularity. Two doors, one in front, and the other in the rear, gave ingress and egress to its inhabitants; while two chimneys, like a couple of asses' ears, surmounted the blue slated roof at either extremity. Yet there was about this clumsy edifice, in spite of these defects, an air approaching to the Aristocratic, which involuntarily led to a suspicion that its owner held himself above the common herd. A toll or clump of magnificent beech trees surrounded it on three sides. Several bothies or hovels, clustered together about bow-shot from the garden wall, might pass current as offices, or the habitations of menials and attendants; while a long road or avenue, terminated by a gate, kept the grounds, if they may be so termed, apart from the rest of the country.

Now, as neither avenues nor walled-gardens were then very frequent in the Highlands, except as appertaining to the residences, at least of the second order of gentry, the existence of both in the present instance was not without its effect; producing a belief that, however mean the house of Ardmore might have appeared if planted in the centre of a wealthy Englishman's park, in the Western Highlands of Scotland its title to gentility could not be gainsayed.

At the distance of perhaps five miles or something less from Ardmore, in a direction towards the head of the loch, stood another dwelling, still more worthy of notice, both on account of its existing condition, and of the singular beauty of the situation in which it was placed. A double row of birch, hazel, and wych elm, overhanging the course of a shallow stream, formed a shady approach through the centre of a glen, excavated, as it were, from the very bowels of the mountain, and hemmed in on every side by hills of the most picturesque yet magnificent formation. At the extremity of that glen, where a plateau of fertile meadow land began to merge, if we may so express ourselves, into the slope of the hill, stood two remarkable structures; one a blackened ruin, of which nothing remained except four *crumbling walls—the other* a cottage or hovel, composed of

the roughest materials. Of the ruin, it may suffice to state, that it had once, and more effectually, discharged the duties which now devolved upon its rival, till the part which its owners took in the civil commotions of the times, brought both upon it and upon them the heavy hand of a triumphant government. The cottage again owed its existence to the devoted affection of a race, who could not endure that the family of one whom they had often followed to the field, should be indebted for a home even to their nearest of kin. Both were imbosomed amid a thick grove of ash, intermixed with fir and stunted oak; and both were equally hidden from the observation of a stranger till he came at once and unexpectedly upon them.

It was a beautiful evening in July, and the sun, disappearing behind the far-off mountains, threw the loch, with the base of the eastern range, completely into the shade. The lofty and spire-like tops were still, however, glittering as if with gold, when a man, emerging from the glen just described, turned abruptly to his left, and began to follow, with a rapid and uneasy tread, the pathway along the margin of the water. A long sweep of road lay before him, now overshadowed with thick foliage, now open to the eye of heaven and cut out of the rocks which overhung the water, till a knoll or rocky eminence pushing itself suddenly forward, caused an abrupt deflection from the right line, and hid the rest of its course from view. Towards that eminence the man appeared to bend his steps; at least his eye was fixed steadily upon it, and the change in his gait as the distance became gradually more and more diminished, seemed to imply that his designs, be they what they might, were not likely to carry him farther.

The most careless observer, following that pedestrian from behind, could not fail to be struck both with the extraordinary symmetry of his form and the elegance of his movements. Considerably above the middle size, broad-shouldered, and tapering in the waist, his limbs, though large, were neither disproportioned to the rest of his figure, nor wanting in the minutest line which the statuary would desire to trace. His dress, too, the trews and plaid of the day, set off such a person to great advantage; while a profusion of dark and curling hair that escaped from beneath a plain blue bonnet, waved gracefully in every light air that rose from the water. The youth, for his springy and active tread gave evidence that he had not yet attained to middle age, carried no arms, *either* for attack or defence. A sort of spear, indeed, was *in his right* hand, such as sportsmen use, when they prefer

attacking the salmon in the depth of his pool, to the more tedious but scientific process of wiling him to his own destruction; but the liester is an instrument too much in use wherever the lord of the fresh waters makes his appearance, to excite, at least in the mind of a Scotchman, any ideas of violence or bloodshed. No doubt the arm which now swayed it might, if called into play, turn even a less formidable weapon to terrible account; but, for the present, nothing about him could lead the most suspicious to imagine either that danger was near, or that this lonely wanderer by the margin of loch Arroch entertained the most remote anticipation of danger.

For some time the youth walked steadily onward, if indeed he may be said to walk steadily, whose gait lags by fits into a lazy saunter, and then springs forward, for a second or two, into a run. Not once did he withdraw his gaze from the eminence of which we have spoken, till he had accomplished something more than four-fifths of his journey, when, as if to rest his aching eyeballs, he suddenly stopped short, and turning round, cast a rapid and feverish glance behind. What a powerful effect was that movement calculated to produce! Of the perfect symmetry of the young man's form we have said enough, and perhaps more than enough. We have alluded also to the singular grace which attached to all his movements; and the inference to be drawn is of course plain to every girl in her teens—that it needed but a countenance at all in keeping with the frame to render him a perfect master-piece of Nature's handiwork. Unfortunately, however, no such points of agreement were here. His face was not merely plain—it was hideously and fearfully deformed. Regular features there doubtless were; that is to say, the eyes were of the darkest hazel, the nose was aquiline, the brow lofty, the mouth well shaped, and stored with teeth white as the purest ivory; but over the whole disease had laid her heavy hand, and the marks of that visitation were imprinted as if with brands of heated iron. The small-pox had seamed his countenance in the most loathsome manner. Eyebrows and eyelashes were all eradicated, while huge furrows ploughed up both forehead and cheeks to a degree as terrible to look upon, as hard to be conceived. In a word, the veiled prophet of Korassan, if he had but half as much to conceal, did well in rendering the form of his visage a mystery to his followers.

The glance which the young man cast behind, though it might suffice to make a stranger aware of these circumstances, *retarded not his* onward progress many moments.

In that brief space of time, he seemed to make himself aware that his motions were not watched by any curious eye; for he again pressed forward, till he arrived at a long ledge of rock, distant about pistol shot from the nearer side of the knoll. Here, concealed, in part, by the branches of some straggling beeches, he suddenly halted, and leaning his elbow upon the edge of the cliff, watched, with an intensity too great for disguise, the coming of some object which was manifestly not yet within his observation.

The youth had kept his station about five minutes or something more, when two female figures suddenly turning the angle of the hill, opened upon his view. That he became visible to them at the same moment at which the bend in the path-way brought them under his notice, their first proceeding gave ample assurance. They stopped, appeared to enter into a brief consultation, and immediately separated; the one withdrawing so as to place the hill between her and the stranger; while the other advanced a few paces in the direction of the spot where he stood. Some violent emotion passed at this moment through his giant frame—his limbs shook under him, his flesh quivered, and his breath came thick and laboured. But the struggle, though fearful while it lasted, was of short duration. He set his teeth firmly together, drew a long sob, and sprang forward.

The lapse of a few seconds sufficed to clear the space that intervened between him and the lady, before whom he stood with the air of one who has striven, though without success, to shake off some strong embarrassment. She was young—probably not more than eighteen years of age, and extremely beautiful, with a countenance that gave index of much enthusiasm, united to lofty principle and good sense; yet she also appeared to labour under no trivial emotion, while she placed her hand, as it seemed reluctantly, within that which he held out. In spite of the ravages which small-pox had effected in his countenance, the most cursory observer could hardly fail to notice a striking resemblance between that youthful pair. There were the same raven locks—the same dark hazel eye—the same broad and lofty forehead in both; while the general shape of their features, as well as the form of their visages, bespoke no very remote relationship between them. They might, indeed, have passed for brother and sister; inasmuch, as the very fashion of their speech accorded, as far, at least, as the rough notes of the man can ever be said to fall in with the softer and more liquid cadences of a woman's voice. Yet there was something in the manner of both which appeared altogether at

variance with the freedom of converse which usually goes along with the most pure and tender of human ties. The young man's face was pale—a flush passed over the cheek of the maiden—and though his gaze rested upon her countenance, hers seemed rooted to the earth, as if by the influence of a spell, which she was either unable or unwilling to resist.

"I have met you, Allan," said she, after a long and uneasy pause, "whether wisely or not, it is now too late to inquire. You pressed the meeting upon me, and I could not refuse it. What is it that you desire of me?"

"First, Marcelly, that you would accept my deepest and warmest thanks for thus reposing confidence in one who, worthless as he knows himself to be, could not quit his native country without gazing once more—it may be for the last time—upon that angel form, and listening to the tones of a voice which has never fallen upon his ear, except to sooth, or to instruct. Thanks, Marcelly, a thousand thanks for this kind act."

"Nay, Allan," replied she, recovering her composure, "you over-estimate the obligation altogether. Not even thanks are due to me for this. Remember that we stand towards each other in the closest relationship—that the same blood which flows in my veins circulates through yours. We were playmates in our childhood too, and, for awhile, at least, friends in our youth. Why then should I hesitate to repose implicit confidence in one to whom I am bound by the ties both of old acquaintance and kindred?"

"Old acquaintance and kindred!" exclaimed he, bitterly. "Yes, we are, indeed, linked together by the ties of kindred and old acquaintance. There was a time when the one knew neither joy nor sorrow, unless it were shared with the other; when our day was short, chiefly, because we spent it together—the night too long, because it kept us apart. Oh, Marcelly, why should the blessed season of childhood and perfect innocence ever pass away?"

"Because Heaven has ordered that it should," replied she,—"because, years, as they roll onwards, work not a greater change in our outward appearance, than they do in our principles and moral conduct. I would it were otherwise! but are we not different in all respects from what we were; and is the difference entirely for the better!

The youth seemed much affected, both with the purport of this brief address, and by the manner in which it was delivered. For a moment, indeed, he kept silence, as if struggling *to gain the mastery* over himself; after which, in a

low and troubled tone, he exclaimed, "It is too true, Marcelly; it is by far too true. Changed, indeed, we are—I, every way for the worse; and you—it may be for the better, as far as others are concerned—but to me—I dare not think upon the difference. Yet you remind me, as often as we meet, that our blood flows from the same fountain. Why is this done? You would not mock me, Marcelly,—I know that you are incapable of playing with the misery of the meanest of your fellow creatures—why then remind me of that which has long, long ceased to be of value—which brings with it but a painful recollection, that neither you nor I are what we once were, at least to one another. But it was not for this I besought you to meet me here. In spite of all that has passed between us—in spite of your coldness, nay, your aversion, still, Marcelly, I love you, ay love you, as man never loved woman: and here, for the last time, in the sight of heaven, and on a spot consecrated by a thousand associations connected with our history—I ask you, will you be mine?"

The maiden listened to this burst of passion with a coldness that partook somewhat of displeasure, while, lifting her eyes from the ground, she turned them slowly, perhaps involuntarily, towards the speaker. There was an expression of strong aversion, not to say disgust, in that glance, which she doubtless laboured to conceal, but which the eagle eye of the youth failed not in a moment to detect. The blood rushed to his cheek as he exclaimed—

"And is it even so! Cannot the companion of my childhood look upon this face without loathing, blasted as it is by the hand of the Creator? Fool! fool that I was, to dream that woman's love could ever be bestowed upon me! Does not every stream that I cross—does not the bosom of the quiet loch, bear witness that for me no feeling of affection can arise!—that I am alone, and must ever continue to be alone, in the world!—Oh God!" he continued, letting go the hand which he had hitherto held, and raising his own, clasped firmly together, towards heaven—"Why hast thou dealt thus with me? Is there aught of mortal stain on me, or on my house, that thou shouldst brand me as an outcast from society? as a wretch doomed never to know the blessings of domestic life—never to find a home where my weary foot may rest? Strike me dead where I stand, if there be pity in thy nature; for death were welcome a thousand times to one who bears the marks of Cain on his forehead!"

The tone of utter dejection in which this somewhat impi*ous ejaculation* was uttered, seemed to go to the heart of

the maiden, who trembled excessively, and strove, by every means in her power, to withdraw the thoughts of her companion from a subject so painful.

"You do injustice to yourself," said she, "to Heaven, and to me. You are no outcast from society on account of any misfortune for which you are not personally responsible; and, as to woman's love, do not think, for a moment, that it is either won or lost by the most perfect symmetry of feature, or its opposite. You, perhaps, may fix your affections—men, they say, generally do—upon a smooth cheek or a fair complexion; but be assured that it is not so with woman. No, Allan; that of which you complain were a light bar, indeed, to the blessings which you profess to covet, had not other and stronger obstacles come in the way; but look to your course of life during the last two or three years, and tell me whether it be such as a virtuous woman could approve? Abandon that, and if there be any thing in the future which one human being can promise to another, believe me that the mark of Cain, of which you speak, will be for ever removed from your brow."

"And will you love me, Marcelly?" rejoined he, speaking rapidly, but in the suppressed tone of one who still labours under the highest degree of excitement, "when this change shall have taken place; when I shake myself free from habits, to which despair alone gave strength, will *you* look upon me with an eye, not of loathing, as you do now, but as you were wont to do in those days when all our hopes, and fears, and wishes were the same? Oh, Marcelly, withdraw not this hope from me! say not that you cannot love me—that there is no similarity of taste or feeling between us! The drowning wretch catches at a straw, and I, too, would fain hold out this miserable hand, no matter how slight the twig that might afford a prospect of salvation. Be it after years, long years of trial—let half a life-time be expended—only say, that, at the close of that period, when the past is forgotten, you will be mine, and from this hour I become a new creature! Speak, Marcelly, I entreat you, speak!—my fate—the fate both of my body and my soul—is at your disposal!"

"Allan," replied she, "it were unjust towards you, and disgraceful to myself, did I, on such a subject, deceive you, even for a moment. Yours I can never be; but if my truest and most sisterly regard—if my friendship, in its most extended sense, have any value in your eyes, become, what you easily may—and I give them to you without reserve."

"*But if you can feel* for me as for a brother, Marcelly,

why not as something dearer than a brother? Are my r
ners, my pursuits, my principles, my habits, distasteft
you? Surely you would not profess a sister's regarc
one who had nothing in common with yourself! Take t
then, that cold and worthless bribe: she who can love
sister, may love as something more than a sister, if she
Say, only, that it is so with thee, and do with me what
wilt!"

The lady was silent for a few moments, as if weig
the sentence to which she was about to give utter
When she did speak, it was with a deliberation and calm
not to be misunderstood.

"It cannot be, Allan," said she. "I have told you be
I tell you now again, that the thing is impossible. A
terly affection I may perhaps return, but more than t
have not to give."

Again her eye fell unwittingly upon his seared co
nance, and a slight shudder ran through her frame. Ke
and sensitively alive to the wrong which Nature had
him, the youth failed not to perceive the movement, an
tributing it to that which was ever uppermost in his
thoughts, his calmness entirely forsook him.

"I see it all! I see it all!" said he; "you could not
that this scathed visage should be near thee at bed
board!—thy blood curdles to look upon it even now!
a loathsome thing in thy sight—is it not so, Marcelly?

As he spoke in a suppressed tone, and her eye was a
ed from him at the moment, she did not observe the vi
tremor that shook his large and muscular form. She
cordingly replied, with some degree of hesitation, '
distress yourself unnecessarily, Allan; it is not as you
pect, but——"

"Enough, enough!" cried he, coldly, while his exte
arms sawed the air; "thou hast answered well, and I t
thee that now, at last, no ground of misunderstanding is
Marcelly, the gentle and the fair, has a right to bestov
affections on one fair and gentle as herself; and, there
Allan Breck must needs learn to play the swain, by
pering soft things into her ear. How well he is fitte
the task, let God and man bear witness! And by an
when the bridal day arrives, is there a crone, from Boa
to Benmore, that will fail to lift up her dim eyes in asto
ment, when she hears that Marcelly, the flower of St
Diarmid, has joined her fate to that of Allan, the spot

Marcelly looked up and beheld, not without some de
of alarm, that her companion laboured under a paroxy

violent emotion. The perspiration stood in drops upon his forehead, his nostrils were dilated, and a stern smile, or rather sneer, curled his upper lip, as he bent his eyes, extended to their fullest stretch, with a savage glare upon her countenance. A girl less collected, because less accustomed to depend upon her own energies, would have doubtless anticipated some tragical conclusion to the interview, but Marcelly lost not her self-command for a moment. She fixed her large, dark eyes calmly upon his, which fell under her glance, confused and overawed; like that of the maniac before his keeper, or the savage bull, when boldly and resolutely confronted.

"I deserve this," said she; "I had no right to anticipate a different result to a meeting against which my own sober judgment warned me. But if I have fallen into an error once, it is at least unnecessary that I should persevere in it. You forget, Allan, what is due both to me and to yourself; and lest you should still farther transgress the bounds of moderation and good feeling, I will leave you. Rest assured that, from the bottom of my heart, I pity you: not because the hand of God may have scathed your brow; but, because, by making yourself the slave of unruly passions, you have sullied the fair fame that came down to you through a long line of illustrious ancestors. Nay, speak to me no more," continued she, as he laboured to suppress his agitation, and made a movement as if to address her. "To prolong this interview could serve no good purpose, either in your case or mine. Yet, I would not part from you in anger. No, Allan, my best and most earnest prayer shall ascend for you day and night; and its constant burden shall be, as it has ever been, that you may yet become, what we have a right to expect in the child of your father. Then, though I may not love you—though your bride I can never be, I will not refuse all that is mine to give—my sincerest esteem, my warmest and most cordial friendship. And now, farewell."

The maiden turned round as she pronounced the last words, and walked leisurely from the spot. No attempt was made to interrupt her progress, nor was a cry uttered for the purpose of detaining her; indeed her companion appeared like one on whom a heavy blow had fallen, utterly unconscious even of his own existence. He raised his eyes, indeed, once while she was speaking, and he continued to gaze vacantly upon her form as it receded among the trees; but neither by voice nor gesture did he exhibit the faintest disposition to divert her from her purpose. No sooner, however, had the last flutter of her mantle died away, than a

sense of his own situation seemed to come back upon him with terrible violence. He cast himself prone upon the earth, and burying his face in his hands, burst into a passion of tears. But tears, which for the most part bring sensible relief to the unhappy, seemed, in this instance, to work out but half their purpose. When he rose again, which he did in the space of three or four seconds, there was an expression of savage ferocity in his countenance, with which a few hurried words, rather thought than spoken, were in no way at variance. "It is past," muttered he, in a low tone, "my fate is sealed from this hour. Heaven has utterly forsaken me, and here I renounce my hopes of heaven." As he said this, he lifted the spear which had fallen from his hand during the conference, and dashing his sleeve across his eyes, bounded back, at a rapid pace, along the path by which he had come.

CHAPTER II.

Having introduced, thus abruptly, to the notice of the reader, two persons, not unlikely to be mistaken for a hero and heroine, the "rules of craft" require that, before we proceed farther with our narrative, we should give him some farther insight into the previous history and present condition of his new acquaintances.

Allan and Marcelly, bearing the common surname Mac Diarmid, were the children of the two gentlemen who stood next, in point both of dignity and importance, to the chief of the clan. Attached to one another, not by the bond of kindred alone, but by esteem, originating in certain contrarieties of character, which, while they lead to no positive distaste, hinder both boys and men from becoming rivals, Norman and Fergus had, in maturer age, drawn the link still closer by marrying sisters, also gentlewomen of the clan, *and, of* course, not very remotely connected by blood with *their husbands.* Norman Mac Diarmid, the father of Allan,

possessed all those stirring qualities which fit a man for taking a prominent part in seasons of broil and confusion. Brave, hardy, and enterprising, delighting too in the sports of the field, and excelling in all manly exercises, he soon became the darling of his tribe; whom, in consequence, first of the great age, and latterly of the extreme youth of their natural leader, he had, on more than one occasion, commanded in the field. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the clan Diarmid were, from generation to generation, distinguished by a devoted adherence to the house of Stuart; and that, from the days of Dundee, down to the period when our narrative commences, they had omitted no opportunity of testifying their loyalty, by the free effusion of their own blood, as well as that of their enemies.

We have spoken of the relatives as differing from one another in various points of character, which were just sufficiently marked to hinder the growth of any jealous feeling between them, without causing the slightest estrangement. By virtue of his closer alliance to the parent stock, for example, the honour of heading the clan ought to have devolved upon Fergus, whose cadetship began more recently than that of Norman by one or two generations; and Norman, without doubt, than whom a more loyal spirit breathed not, would have consented to such an arrangement without a murmur. Yet it was, perhaps, as well, both for himself and others, that Norman was not called upon to make the sacrifice. Fergus entertained no predilection whatever for the "rapture of the strife." Shrewd, cautious, long-sighted and wary, the bent of his genius directed him rather how to preside at the council board, than to direct the progress of military movements; and hence, throughout all the risings that occurred, and they were both numerous and full of hazard, from 1715 to 1745, he never once quitted the shelter of his own roof, or brought his name into bad odour with the existing government. Had this conduct originated in a mere selfish desire of shielding his own person from danger, or preserving his own property, it would have brought down upon him the merited contempt of his neighbours and kinsmen; but while it undeniably did render both secure, it extended, at the same time, a happy influence over the persons and property of all around him. In seasons of disaster, Fergus stood forward as the acknowledged head of a sept, against whom, therefore, however guilty individuals might be, the general charge of disaffection could not be brought; and as these chanced to be of frequent recurrence, especially during the nonage of the present chief, the

whole clan learned to feel, that in more senses of the word than one, "Discretion is sometimes the better part of valour."

The campaign of 1715—if the ill-advised rising under the Earl of Mar deserve so to be designated—proved eminently disastrous in its consequences to the clan Diarmid. Attacked while on their march to join the Jacobite army at Perth, by a very superior force of their hereditary enemies, they had suffered, in spite of the heroic exertions of their young leader, a signal defeat; and, being pursued into their own country, not all the protestations of Fergus availed to save them generally from the vengeance of the conqueror. The house of Glenarroch, for example, was burned to the ground, with all the shielings and homesteads dependent on it; while the tenantry were driven like wild animals to the hill, and the laird himself compelled to find shelter where he could among his neighbours. Nay, Ardmore, itself, though eventually saved, had well nigh suffered a similar fate; inasmuch as the policy of its owner, though deep enough to hoodwink the agents of Government, carried with it no influence over the passions of a rival sept. Hence the general appearance of desolation along the margin of the loch at the period when our history opens—as well as the substitution of a rudely constructed hut for the commodious mansion at the head of the glen, where Norman and his ancestors had for many ages resided.

For some years after the suppression of this rebellion, the clans continued to brood in silence over their wrongs, without, however, venturing to carry into execution any of the wild schemes which their chiefs, from time to time, concocted. It was during this interval that Norman became a father; Fergus, also, about two years later, becoming entitled to the same appellation, though at the sacrifice of a life dearer to him by far than that of the infant that smiled in his face. The mother of Marcelly survived her birth something less than three weeks, leaving her child as a last legacy to the protection of her aunt, by whom she was nurtured with the same care that was bestowed upon young Allan. As a necessary consequence, the cousins became companions from the cradle; for Glenarroch and Ardmore were so little apart, that Fergus consented to leave his daughter in the hands of her nearest female relative long after the season of mere infancy had passed away.

As the children grew up, they were found, both in feature and form, to bear a striking resemblance to each other, due allowance being of course made for the difference of sexes.

Their dispositions and tempers were not, however, the same. Though it could scarcely be said that he exhibited any positive vice, there was, almost from his birth, a headstrong waywardness about the boy, which an excess of indulgence on the part of his parents served in no degree to correct. Because he was devoid of fear, robust of frame, patient of fatigue, and expert in all the amusements suited to his years, he seemed, in the partial eyes of his father, to be faultless; while his mother doted on him by reason of his extreme beauty, and the ardent attachment which, from his very infancy, he exhibited towards herself. It was to no purpose that the Rev. Neil Macpherson, a worthy non-juring clergyman, who acted in the double capacity of chaplain and tutor in the family, complained that his charge was either extremely dull of comprehension, or incorrigibly obstinate. Of dulness, the father contended, that no boy could fairly be accused, who surpassed all his companions in those exercises which, more than any others, required readiness of wit, and slight of hand; while, on the other score, it was concluded that the good Parson mistook for obstinacy the ground-work of that firmness of purpose, without which no man ever yet made a figure in the world. In a word, not only did the fond parents shut their eyes to faults which lay exposed to all around them, but their very ears were stopped against the reports of those who sought to warn them for their own and their son's advantage. The results were exactly such as follow in all similar cases. A lofty spirit, which, if judiciously managed, might have sobered down into rigid integrity, and an unbending adherence to principle, grew rank, like a tree unpruned, and became pride, in its worst form. Selfishness, also, the invariable accompaniment of pride and petulance, its next kin, overshadowed almost every amiable quality in the young man's composition, who learned, day by day, to esteem both persons and things only in proportion as they tended to flatter his own views, or add to his own gratifications.

We have said, that though the cousins bore a striking resemblance to each other in the form of their features, there was not much of similarity between their tempers and habits. Perhaps [illegible]ught to have qualified this statement, by observing, that [illegible]luded only to the characters which they severally assumed after childhood had ripened into youth. If there be such things as natural dispositions—a fact which we are not disposed to question—then had Nature dealt with these two persons pretty nearly after the same manner; it was *the current of* circumstances, or, to express ourselves

more accurately, the bent of their respective educations, which wrought out the contrarieties to which we now refer. As mere infants, and, indeed, as something more than infants, the one displayed not more unequivocal symptoms of a lofty spirit than the other. The eye of Marcelly could flash at a supposed insult, and her little cheek glow when listening to a tale of wrong, quite as readily as the eye or the cheek of Allan; and, as to personal fear, it may fairly be questioned whether the one knew any thing more about it than the other. But the outbreakings of temper, which, when displayed by the boy, were either treated as subjects of merriment, or suffered to pass unheeded, received, as often as exhibited by Marcelly, a fitting rebuke; not conveyed in the tone of harshness, for of that her aunt was incapable, but in the language of affectionate remonstrance. As a matter of course, the girl obtained, day by day, a more decided command over herself,—and gentleness and magnanimity, a total absence of selfishness, and a considerate regard to the feelings of others, arose out of elements that might have brought forth a very different structure.

The education of these young persons, using that term in its ordinary sense, was intrusted, as we took occasion to observe a little while ago, principally to the management of the Reverend Neil Macpherson; one of those strange mixtures of simplicity and shrewdness with which the Episcopal church of Scotland, during its season of trial, abounded. Of humble birth, the son, indeed, of a feuar on the lands of Cluny, Mr. Macpherson had been supported at King's College, Aberdeen, partly upon an exhibition, called in Scottish parlance a bursary; partly through the voluntary contributions of his chief, and of a few Highland gentlemen besides. Here he enjoyed the benefit of an unrestricted intercourse with many of the most devoted adherents to the house of Stuart; for the provinces north of the Tay continued, long after the revolution, to retain a strong predilection in favour of the ancient dynasty; and being admitted into holy orders by Bishop Haliburton, he served, for a year or two, a cure or protected chapel in that good man's diocess. But the halcyon days for episcopacy in Scotland—if any days may be so designated posterior to the revolution—were of short continuance. Relieved by Queen Anne from the persecutions which they endured under William, the accession of the house of Hanover to the throne, let loose, once more, upon the ministers of that communion, the vengeance of *their rivals*; and the issue of the rebellion in 1715, contri*buted nothing* towards placing them in a more favourable

position. Laws were now passed, not merely to deprive the non-jurors of their benefices, but to prohibit them from the discharge of their professional offices; for it was expressly declared that "every Episcopal minister, performing divine service in any meeting-house within Scotland, and omitting to pray for King George and the royal family, (and a private room, in which should be assembled nine persons in addition to the family, was held to come under the meaning of the act,) should suffer six months' imprisonment." We need not add, that the spirit, both of civil and religious bitterness, which then pervaded Scotland, permitted little lenity to be displayed in the execution of this edict, or that the Episcopal clergy became, in consequence, a proscribed race, to whom, in sheer self-defence, the subtilty of the serpent was to the full as necessary as the meekness of the dove.

Expelled from his cure, and rendered an object of especial jealousy to the constituted authorities, in consequence of the part which he was understood to have taken during the recent troubles, Parson Neil (for so he was called) sought refuge in the fastnesses of Inverness-shire, where, however, he found less disposition to protect him than he had anticipated. The Grants, strong in the support of the law, and zealous in the cause of the kirk, readily promised their aid in executing certain warrants that were out against him; and as Cluny exhibited an excusable disinclination to oppose himself, single-handed, to the storm, the Parson was again reduced to the necessity of providing for his own safety. He removed, in consequence, into Mac Diarmid's territory, carrying with him letters of hearty recommendation to the chief; and as an ancient alliance subsisted between the two clans, he received from his new patron a generous welcome. He passed at once into the family of Norman Mac Diarmid, then acting leader of the sept; where, besides officiating as clergyman to a numerous and devoted flock, he undertook the education of the children, a task for which considerable learning, and a thorough acquaintance with the traditions of his native country, rendered him well qualified.

Having said so much of this respected individual, we cannot consistently lay aside the subject, without adding a few last words, by way of rendering our portrait complete in all its details. Of the outward man, meaning thereby the personal appearance and address of Parson Neil, it may be remarked in general terms, that if there was nothing calculated to draw towards him the immediate attention of a stranger, there *was enough* to satisfy the more searching observer, *that he possessed* a great deal of what is emphatical-

ly termed mother-wit. Somewhat short of stature, but robust and active in his make, with a countenance which bore the strongest possible impress of a Celtic origin, Parson Neil could either bend his features to an expression of absolute meekness, or throw into them an air of dignity approaching to command. Well read in human nature likewise, more especially as it is modified on the northern side of the Grampian range, he could adapt his conversation and bearing to the tastes of every circle in which he might chance to be thrown. His deep and sonorous voice, assisted by the excellent quality of his Gaelic, (an accomplishment, on the possession of which he greatly piqued himself,) rendered him, as often as he undertook to expound the Scriptures, a perfect oracle among his poor parishioners, who received his admonitions with at least as much of reverence as ever Arab paid to the prelections of Mohammed. But it was not in the church alone that Neil commanded both the esteem and respect of his people. Frank and open in his conversation, not indisposed to join in the festivities of the poor—a skilful marksman, and an indefatigable pedestrian, he taught all descriptions of men to look up to him: the aged, because he was wiser and better read in the Bible than themselves; the young, because he neither opposed himself to their amusements, nor scrupled to take a share in them. But that which more than any thing besides won for him golden opinions among the Mac Diarmids, was the persuasion, whence acquired we have not been able to collect, that he had been actually *out* in the *fifteen*.

"She's something like a parson, tat," remarked a worthy retailer of wares, the only *merchant* within the district, and himself not suspected of an excess of heroism,—"she fears neither te Teevil nor te Elector o' Hanover—she fought te tane in te auld kirk o' Aberdeen mony a time, and te tither at Shirra Muir ance at ony rate."

To the care of this person Allan Mac Diarmid and his cousin Marcelly were very early committed; the one having attained his fourth, the other her second year, when the stranger arrived among them. Upon both he bestowed as great a degree of attention as the most unreasonable guardian could have required; and, for awhile, at least, he enjoyed the satisfaction of perceiving that his assiduity was in neither case wasted. But, as years rolled on, the culpable fondness of his parents encouraged the boy to pay less and less regard to the admonitions of the tutor, who ceased at *least to* retain any other hold over his attention than an *occasional* appeal to his pride might produce. Not that Allan

ever shook off entirely the moral influence, whether originating in affection or respect, which a tutor, if he be conscientious and reasonable, never fails to establish over the most wayward of his pupils; but it operated only so far as to dash the cup of guilty enjoyment with remorse, by no means to hinder that goblet from being drained even to the dregs.

It was not so with Marcelly; exempt from the pernicious consequences attendant on over indulgence elsewhere, she profited by the excellent instruction which he conveyed to her, till she became, by degrees, one of the best informed persons within the circuit of the western Highlands. It is true, that with the more solid information impressed upon her mind, was mixed up no trifling share of traditionary lore, of which the tendency doubtless was to foster an enthusiasm, naturally, perhaps, more extravagant than need be. But for this the worthy parson was not wholly responsible. Marcelly found in her nurse, Christian Macoll, a ready and willing chronicler of the deeds of her forefathers. To the details of these she listened with a degree of avidity far surpassing that which she displayed in any other pursuit; and we say a great deal, when we hazard this with reference to one, whose thirst of knowledge in all its branches was excessive.

The result of all this was, that as the cousins increased in stature, though they pursued the same studies, continued inseparable in their hours of play, and appeared at least as much attached to each other as their connexion by blood might imply, many and striking diversities in their characters began gradually to develop themselves. Allan, humoured in all his fancies, exhibited an inclination to render even his regard for Marcelly subservient to his feelings for himself. He caressed her only in proportion as she came into his views and took part in his diversions; whilst he would treat even her roughly, should she at any time prefer the society even of his mother to his own. Marcelly, on the other hand, was ever proud to sacrifice her own humours in order to gratify her somewhat tyrannical, though not cold-blooded relative; though the exertion necessary to do so she was not always able to conceal either from herself or from those around her.

Time passed, and both the boy and the girl began to attain to that period in life, when an unrestrained intercourse between the sexes seldom fails to lead to results of a serious nature. At the relative ages of sixteen and fourteen, it would be difficult for the human imagination to conceive a more strikingly beautiful pair. The boy had shot up into *incipient manhood*, with an elegance of bearing and a regu-

larity of feature rarely equalled; the girl kept pace with him, only that the lines of beauty were in her case softened down into the most exquisite gentleness. It appeared too, that the passage of years, while it wrought a change in the external form of the relatives, was not without its effect upon their feelings. Allan became day by day more attentive to his gentle cousin, and as a necessary consequence, less exclusively devoted to himself; while she, by some strange caprice, seemed to shun his society, in exact proportion to the degree of assiduity with which he would have pressed it upon her. His irritable temper of course took fire, as often as his play-fellow put this mortification upon him, and he gave vent to it both by words and gestures, which left no agreeable impression on her mind. But the burst of the moment over, he never failed of returning again as a suitor to the charge, and she not unfrequently yielded to entreaty, what she had peremptorily refused to menace. Nevertheless, it required but a trivial acquaintance with the machinery of the human heart to perceive, that events were even then in progress, of which the issues were not likely to be happy. Allan's school-boy regard for his cousin was fast ripening into a stronger passion; whereas, on her part, the seeds of passion were not only not sown,—but, in all probability, had as yet no existence.

Things were in this state, when the father of Allan, engaging with headstrong zeal in one of those conspiracies which served from time to time to bring their abettors into unnecessary trouble, perished under circumstances of peculiar hardship. There was a meeting of certain gentlemen attached to the Stuart cause, at an obscure inn on the banks of Loch Earn, of which intimation was given, by a traitor somewhat imprudently trusted, to the agents of government. The consequence was, that the inn was attacked by a force which rendered resistance hopeless; and the greater number of those present submitted quietly to their fate,—which in the end proved, as far as they were personally concerned, the reverse of rigorous. But Norman Mac Diarmid would enter into no compromise with the followers of the Elector of Hanover. At the head of a few attendants, he cut his way through the guard, though not without receiving a severe wound in the struggle; from which, as there were no means of dressing it at the moment, he never recovered. He died, indeed, in a bothy, about a long day's journey from home, without so much as bestowing a parting benediction *on his wife* and son.

Great was the sorrow of the whole clan when intelligence

of this calamity reached them; for Norman, as we have already taken occasion to observe, was regarded, and not without justice, as the flower of his race. With respect to the widow, her grief, though perfectly sincere, was tempered by a reference to one blessing which was still left to her. Her son survived; and so entirely were her affections centred in him, that the loss even of her husband sufficed not to bow her to the earth. She caused Norman's bloody corse to be washed and waked with all the ceremonies usual on such occasions: the Parson read over it the funeral service amid flashing eyes and glittering claymores; it was borne to the spot where the ashes of the first Mac Diarmid lay, surrounded by a host of sincere mourners, who retired from the grave to vow vengeance on the murderers, while quaffing large potations to the memory of the deceased. But all this, though heart-rending enough, made less impression upon the widow than might have been expected. Allan still survived; and so long as he was spared to her, there was no misfortune under which she should not be able to bear up.

Six months had elapsed from the date of Norman's funeral, and matters were beginning to assume their old aspect in and around Glenarroch, when Allan was seized with the small-pox: a disease much more dreaded, and, generally speaking, more fatal, a century ago, than it is now. As a measure of just precaution, Marcelly was immediately removed to Ardmore, and his mother alone remained to nurse and comfort her son under his visitation. Allan suffered terribly during the continuance of the malady, his sufferings being but little relieved by the injudicious treatment to which he was subjected; but nature had bestowed upon him an iron constitution, and in defiance of heated rooms and a total exclusion from fresh air, he recovered. But he rose from his sick-bed so completely changed, that "the mother that bore him" would have been puzzled to recognise her son. Not only was every line of beauty erased from his countenance, but the scars and blotches of that fell disease were so numerous and so large as to distort the very form of his features; indeed it was impossible that even his dearest and nearest of kin could ever again look upon that face without loathing. Yet the unhappy youth remained for awhile ignorant of the havoc which disease had made. He saw, indeed, and not without surprise, that his mother never approached him now, except with an expression of the deepest sorrow *in her countenance*; but as every means of *acquiring a knowledge of* the truth was carefully kept

him, he only wearied himself to no purpose in endeavouring to account for the fact. At last, however, the fatal discovery was effected. From his own apartment the mirror had been removed, with the vain hope of gradually preparing him for the blow which must eventually fall. As yet, however, courage enough to introduce the subject had been wanting; when, contrary to the prohibition of the nurse, he passed, one morning, into his mother's room. She was sitting before the glass in the act of dressing her hair, when Allan, approaching from behind, brought his own seared and blasted visage within the influence of its reflective powers. He saw the horrid apparition, and shrank back in dismay, while his mother, uttering a loud shriek, sprang from her chair, and threw her arms about his neck.

"Why have you done this, Allan?" cried she: "go back, go back, I beseech you, to your own room; and never look into that glass again."

"I do not understand you, mother," replied Allan; "both your words and actions are mysterious to me. Why should I not look into that glass? or, rather, what was that hideous spectacle that met me, when I did look into it?"

"Do not ask me, my son," exclaimed his mother, in an imploring tone; "it is not thus, it is not now that I can venture to reply to your questions, or say aught except to entreat that you would retire to your own apartment. I will come to you there, when the agitation of the moment is over, and tell you all, that you must know sooner or later, however painful it may be for me to speak or you to listen."

Allan obeyed like one who follows not the bent of his own volitions, but acts under the guidance of some mysterious power, of the nature of which he is ignorant, though he feels and acknowledges its force. There was a strange load upon his mind,—a sort of vague anticipation that some dreadful calamity had overtaken him, not unmixed with a sense of awe, closely allied to superstition. He had listened in his childhood to so many tales of wonder, he had heard so much of familiar spirits, wraiths, ghosts, and the Botach glass, that an undefined belief in the visible existence of such beings fixed itself involuntarily in his imagination; and the dreadful vision which had just appeared to him, recalled to their full vigour ideas, which, though they might have slumbered for awhile, were never absolutely effaced. On the other hand, he was not wholly ignorant of the dire effects sometimes produced by the [illegible]

which he was recovering. It is true that he had never beheld so deplorable a specimen as that which his mother's mirror seemed to present; yet the suspicion that he might himself be a victim did arise in his mind, though scarcely with sufficient clearness to dispel other and more mysterious anticipations. On the whole, therefore, he returned to his own apartment in a state of comparative calmness; prepared, indeed, to receive some communication that would harrow him to the quick, though totally at a loss to determine the shape that it might assume.

In the mean while his mother, to whom the full weight of her son's misfortune seemed only now to have occurred, gave vent, as soon as his back was turned, to a passion of sorrow. She threw herself upon the bed, and wept the hot scalding tears, not, we are afraid, of grief, softened by a resignation to the Divine will, but of misery that partook somewhat of the tone of desperation. It was, indeed, the remembrance alone that the die was cast, that Allan had for himself wrought out a knowledge of evil which she would have hidden from him, had she possessed the power, for ever, that gave her strength in any degree to control her emotion, and to enter upon the task that awaited her. She rose, made an effort to efface the traces of weeping, and joined Allan as she had promised. It is not necessary to detail at length the particulars of their interview. Enough is done when we state, that for awhile she found it difficult to impress upon the mind of her son the reality of the facts as they had occurred; that when he did begin to comprehend her full meaning, his agony rose to the most distressing height; that he ran to the glass—stared at the disfigured countenance reflected there—raised his hand to his forehead several times, as if distrusting the accuracy of sight unassisted, and then burst into a long, loud laugh—the index of "grief too deep for tears." All the efforts, moreover, both of his mother and Parson Neil, to reconcile him to a calamity which he knew to be irremediable, failed of producing the smallest effect. He shut himself up in his room, caused the windows to be darkened, and refused, during many days, to hold intercourse with any members of the family.

CHAPTER III.

A FORTNIGHT passed over in this distressing state, and both his mother and the chaplain began to entertain serious apprehensions for Allan's reason, when it occurred to the latter, that if the power of withdrawing him from a sense of his misfortune rested with any one, it was to Marcelly alone that they could turn with the smallest prospect of success. The kind-hearted girl, when applied to on the subject, expressed her readiness to act in any capacity that might be required, and set all the fears of infection, with which her nurse would have restrained her, at defiance. She accompanied her tutor to Glenarroch, and left him to arrange, according to his own judgment, both the time and manner in which the interview should take place. But the remedy to which the good man trusted so much, was found not to be immediately efficient. Allan refused to expose his deformity to the observation even of Marcelly.

"Why should I render myself more distasteful than I am in her eyes. Marcelly has long ceased to be to me the affectionate creature that she once was, and is it probable that her kindly feelings will return towards a wretch so loathsome as disease has made me? No, no, sir! tell Marcelly that I thank her, deeply, heartily, thank her, but that I will not display this hideous countenance even before her."

There was no arguing with a youth in the temper of mind which could lead to such a determination, and for the present matters were allowed to continue as they were.

Though disappointed at the issue of this first trial, the parson adhered to his opinion that the device would ultimately succeed. Marcelly was accordingly prevailed upon to prolong her stay at Glenarroch; and the anticipations which led to that arrangement proved in the end to have been well founded. Day by day Allan learned from his mother, and the attendant that waited upon him, that his cousin continued an inmate under the same roof. By degrees associations began to revive; he spoke of her more frequently than he used to do, asked some questions respecting her personal appearance

and mode of spending her time, and consented at last to admit her to an interview, provided the window was more than usually darkened. No objection was made to this arrangement; and the scene, though abundantly distressing, passed off to the satisfaction, at least of the elder branches of the family. A similar course was adopted twice or thrice, with an effect, on each occasion, more happy than before, till at length Marcelly felt herself in a condition to touch upon the subject of his seclusion.

"You must not give way, Allan, to unworthy feelings," said she, "nor rebel against your Maker because he has seen fit to lay his heavy hand upon you. What is personal beauty, especially in a man, that its loss, if it be entirely lost, should make you forget what is due to yourself, and to the name that you bear? Is there one among your friends or kindred that will love you the less because the form of your face may be changed, or are your prospects in life impaired by a calamity which affects only your outward features?"

"You do not know the extent of that calamity," replied he bitterly; "were I to withdraw this curtain, Marcelly, you would shrink from me, as from a venomous reptile."

"Let me make the experiment, dear Allan," was her ready answer, delivered in her most persuasive tone: "I am sure that you exaggerate the evil, since I must call it so, exactly as you used to do by perverseness when I chose rather to sit and hear old Christie tell her stories, than carry your creel to the river. Nay, now, by all the happy days that we have spent together, let me convince you, that in my eyes at least, you are now just, as much an object of esteem and affection as you ever were."

Allan trembled in every joint as with a desperate hand he seized the curtain, and turning at the same time his distorted countenance towards Marcelly, withdrew it with a crash. To say that she was shocked, when the strong light rushing in made her aware, in a moment, of the frightful change in his appearance, were to employ language quite inappropriate to the occasion. Prepared she was for much—she had been told that he was grievously deformed, and her fancy conjured up the likenesses of various persons, some of them heavily marked, whom she had chanced to meet at different times; but for such a spectacle as now greeted her eyes, she was not prepared. Not all her resolution availed to repress a start for which the suddenness of the movement might, perhaps, have accounted, had it been possible for her to meet

without flinching the glance that he threw immediately towards her. But there was an expression in that stare so fierce, a glare so thoroughly desperate, not to use any harsher term, that her eye could not support it. It fell to the ground, while her hand, rising as it seemed involuntarily, passed with a quick but painful emotion, across her brow.

"Did I not say so?" shouted Allan, springing back into a darkened corner of the room. "Did I not tell you that to look upon this face without disgust and loathing, was beyond your power. Go, Marcelly! leave me, ere I curse both you and myself, to the fate which Heaven has worked out for me—we never meet again."

She would have spoken to him in accents of soothing and comfort, but he would not hear her. His fiercer passions seemed to have gained the mastery over all the associations connected with days gone by, for he stamped furiously on the ground, and again commanded her to be gone. The poor girl wept bitterly and withdrew.

Many days elapsed, after this harrowing interview, ere Allan would consent to receive a visit, even from his mother or Parson Neil. His curtains were all this while drawn so closely together, that scarce a ray of light could penetrate; and the nurse herself was commanded to withdraw so soon as she had arranged the food, which in slender quantities he permitted her to deposite on his table. It seemed, indeed, as if the iron had entered so deeply into his soul, that reason herself ran a hazard of being shaken from her seat; for he positively refused to hold the slightest intercourse with any human being, and noticed those who waited upon him only by signs. But in the midst of their deliberations how it behooved them to act, Allan suddenly burst like an apparition into the presence of his guardians. They were assembled in the little parlour, the only room in the house which could by any misapplication of human language be termed public—when the door flew open, and Allan, arrayed in his ordinary garb, entered. As if actuated by one common feeling of dismay, all rose from their seats. He broke forth into an hysteric laugh, and dashing his hand violently on the table, exclaimed, in a tone of bitter irony: "What, afraid! all of you afraid! I am not the evil genius of the name. No—I am Allan—Allan Breck, if you will —but still Allan Mac Diarmid, as both friends and foes shall learn to their cost. Look up, gentlemen—it may be but an unpleasant object to contemplate—but this disfigured countenance is not my handiwork—it is such as God has made it."

We need scarcely add, that his friends hastened, by all the attention which they could bestow, to divert his thoughts into a more agreeable channel; and that their efforts, though not attended with immediate success, produced, by degrees, the fruits that might be expected from them.

It is unnecessary to dwell more at length upon this stage in our history. Let it suffice to state, that Allan, passing from one extreme to another, rushed all at once into the most conspicuous positions which circumstances could enable him to assume. Not only was his reluctance to hold intercourse with strangers overcome, but he never appeared so much at ease, as when conversing with, or treating as his familiars, persons whom he had never, or next to never, seen before. The selfishness, too, which, from his infancy, had formed a prominent feature in his character, acquired every day additional strength; and as years increased upon him, he began to indulge it more and more, in a fashion as little creditable to himself as it was unsatisfactory to his friends. Debauchery, in its lowest and most odious forms, became the main object of his existence. His associates were all chosen from among the most depraved and dissolute of the youth that dwelt within a circuit of many miles, over whom he gradually established a decided ascendency, not more by reason of his superior power, both of body and mind, than because he far surpassed them all in reckless extravagance and unbounded licentiousness.

Of the irregularities in which her son indulged, Mrs. Mac Diarmid long remained ignorant, because she refused to credit the faintest report to his discredit. It was not so with the worthy chaplain, who strove, both by advice and entreaty, to reclaim his pupil from error, but who was invariably treated with an indifference that partook largely of contempt.

From Marcelly alone the unhappy youth appeared desirous of concealing his irregularities. He met her but rarely, it is true, for she had now assumed her proper place in the household of her father; and it seemed as if the associations connected with Glenarroch were not agreeable to her. But as often as they did meet, he put a remarkable restraint upon his manner, striving to appear, in all respects, what he had been in the happiest days of their childhood. Yet Marcelly took no delight in his society, and he was too sharp of observation not to perceive that the case was so. How far the knowledge of that fact may have urged him forward in his wild career, we cannot pretend to say. All that we do know is this—that, day by day, and month by month, the evil pro-

pensities of his nature gained strength. He became more and more proud, more and more selfish, more and more bent upon indulging his own humours—no matter how great the sacrifice which their indulgence might compel others to make.

Two years had elapsed since his recovery from the small-pox, when Allan, into the state of whose feelings the reader has already received some insight, ventured, for the first time, to address his cousin in the language of a lover. He was repulsed with firmness, perhaps with something of severity; for which the infatuated youth found a cause in the grievous deformity of his features; and he received, on the instant, an impression, not easy to be eradicated, that Heaven had marked him out as an object of its especial hate. Smarting under the sense of this imaginary wrong, he plunged deeper and deeper into the abyss of folly and crime. The whole human race became to him, with the exception of one or two individuals, personal enemies. Believing that he was abhorred of all, he repaid that abhorrence with interest; and though he controlled his temper so far as to deal with those around him as with his tools, it cannot be said that he entertained, even for the most trusted of his comrades, the shadow of affection. In a few words, if there ever existed a misanthropist, Allan Breck was one; not theoretically, as those may be who withdraw from society and indulge their spleen in idle murmurs, but practically, and to the utmost extent to which circumstances would permit him to go.

The excesses of which Allan was guilty, and the habits of low debauchery in which he indulged, began, by degrees, to create such a feeling in the clan, that his uncle considered it necessary to remonstrate, in strong language, against him. His remonstrances were met with a haughty insolence, which Fergus could not brook, and the friendly intercourse which had so long subsisted between the two families suffered an interruption. Mrs. Mac Diarmid began, in consequence, to suspect, that for the tales which occasionally reached her, there might be some foundation, and she summoned resolution to hold, at last, a serious conversation with Parson Neil. Devoted to the interest of his patron's house, the Parson concealed nothing: he laid before her a full statement of her son's enormities; he pointed out the inevitable consequences to which a perseverance in such a course must lead, and he summed up all by entreating that *she would* take the only step that promised to hold out even *a chance of* reclaiming him from his errors. "He must be

withdrawn for a time," continued the Parson, "from the scenes of his early profligacy, and removed from the contagion of a reprobate society; and as this can be done only by his temporary banishment from this place, you must overcome your personal predilections so far as to consent to a separation. Allan's education is, as yet, very imperfect: in every point of view, it were fitting that he spent a year or two in the low country, that his knowledge of the world may be enlarged, and himself become more worthy to play the part which may yet be reserved for him."

The lady doted upon her son, and would not, for a time, consent to entertain the proposition. As day after day, however, brought in fresh rumours to his disadvantage, and Fergus, not less than the chaplain, urged the adoption of the scheme, she gave, at length, a reluctant consent—this sole condition being reserved, that Allan himself did not object to the arrangement. Now, it had not entered into the calculations of Parson Neil, that to consult the wishes of a party circumstanced as Allan would be either requisite or prudent, and hence found his patroness resolute, he ceased, at once, to augur any good from the measure; but he was deceived. Allan not only offered no objection to the plan, but appeared to grasp at it with avidity, expressing himself impatient for the arrival of the day which should send him forth, as he expressed it, to look upon the world. All, therefore, that remained to be done, preliminary to his departure, was to make arrangements touching the place of his future residence; and it being finally determined that he should take up his abode in Edinburgh, where he would at once enjoy the benefits of a polished society, and the instruction of able masters, due care was taken, through the instrumentality of an ancient chum, or college acquaintance, of the Parson, to provide for him such accommodation as was deemed fitting.

While the epistolary communications necessary to attain this end were in progress between Parson Neil and Mr. Saunders Keelivine, writer, of the Lawn Market, Allan withdrew himself, in some measure, from his loose companions, and made more than one effort to regain the place which he once held in the esteem of his uncle and cousin. Though not positively rejected, his advances were coolly met—a circumstance which wounded his vanity to the full as much as it excited his regret; nevertheless, he persevered so far as to force himself, on more than one occasion, into their society. Towards Marcelly, in particular, his attentions amounted to something like persecution; for he dogged

her at every turn, and never failed, as often as an opportunity offered, of addressing her in language such as she had repeatedly forbidden him to employ; till she ceased, at last, to quit the shelter of her father's roof, unless under his own protection. Allan became, by turns, furious and desponding. Now he would meditate some act of desperate violence, such as might effectually humble the pride, as he termed it, of his cousin; now he would imprecate curses upon his own head, or blaspheme against Heaven, for having made him what he was. But, as the time appointed for his departure drew on, all his former passions seemed to merge in the deep and harrowing conviction that he was doomed, by fate, to a life of utter misery. Could he but hope, at some period or other, no matter how distant, to effect a change in the feelings of Marcelly, then there might be, even yet, an object in life worth seeking; but while scorned by her, towards whom he looked as the benighted mariner looks to some solitary light in the horizon, then, indeed, was the future without a beacon by which to guide his course.

It was with the desperate chance of turning to some favourable account the gentler feelings which an approaching separation is apt to excite, that Allan, on the evening preceding the day that was to witness the commencement of his journey, prevailed upon his cousin to grant him a meeting. With the circumstances that attended this interview, as well as the results to which it led, our readers have already been made acquainted. We, therefore, return to the thread of our history, which has been somewhat too long interrupted.

CHAPTER IV.

Stung to the quick by the reception which Marcelly had afforded him, Allan pursued his way homeward in a frame of mind which may, perhaps, come within the reach of a fertile imagination, but which common language were inadequate to describe. For a time, rage—ungovernable rage was the single passion that swayed him. He uttered an

execrations, he made no rash vows, but hurried forward with a rapidity of step that would have afforded sufficient testimony, had there been any one near to record it, as to the state of absolute chaos into which his thoughts were plunged. As he approached the foot of the avenue, however, pride began to struggle for the mastery over anger. He slackened his pace, turned his face so as to catch the breeze that blew from the loch, and, shaking his head violently, made an effort to recover at least the semblance of composure. But all his exertions availed not. The struggle to smother one strong feeling brought another into play; and, however mortifying the circumstance might be, tears rose into his eyes, and more than a woman's softness stole over him. This was especially the case as he grasped the latch by which the outer door was secured; indeed, his agitation became such, that his first and most obvious endeavour was to raise the fastening with as little noise as possible, that he might pass unobserved to his own apartment. But that he found it impracticable to effect. His mother, from whose mind the prospect of to-morrow's separation was never absent, listened anxiously for his footstep in the hall, and hearing it, though planted with extraordinary care, sprang forward to meet him. We have stated elsewhere, that from his infancy, Allan entertained for his mother the tenderest regard. Before her, indeed, his temper, however ruffled, became, on all occasions, calm and serene, as if a spell controlled it; indeed, an exalted sense of filial piety constituted almost the only virtue which neither misfortune nor crime could eradicate from his nature. Yet, on the present occasion, even that failed of producing its customary effect. He pushed her roughly aside, and hurrying up stairs, took shelter in his own apartment.

To have her proffered embrace rejected by the son on whom she doted, was to Mrs. Mac Diarmid an occurrence so novel, that she found herself wholly incapable of accounting for it. For a moment or two she stood irresolute where he left her; but a conviction that some dire calamity must have befallen him, soon overcoming every other consideration, her presence of mind almost immediately returned. She hurried after him, and pushing open his unfastened door, saw by the feeble twilight which still glimmered, that he lay extended on his face across the bed. She sprang forward, and throwing her arms convulsively around his neck, burst into a flood of weeping.

"You are unhappy, Allan; I have long suspected that

you were so, and yet you have not unburdened yourself to me. Is this kind? have I deserved it at your hands?"

"I am indeed unhappy, mother," replied he, "so unhappy, that I pray God there may not be upon the face of the earth another human being whose miseries equal mine. But wherefore should I distress you with a detail of my sorrows? you need but look on my face, and part, at least, of the load that presses me down, becomes familiar to you. Oh, my mother! why was I ever born?—and, above all, why did you ever bring me through that dire distemper, to perish under which would have been mercy compared to this?"

"Do not say so, Allan, nor blame any one besides for events which God alone could regulate. You were born to be the support and comfort of your mother, who, but for you, were friendless in the world; and you were raised from your sick bed in order that you might continue to cheer her amid the growing coldness and estrangement of those from whom she had a right to look for other treatment."

"You have touched the chord that vibrates here," exclaimed he, rising, and laying his hand on his bosom; "you have probed the wound that has long rankled in my heart. I, too, complain, that those from whom I had a right to look for kindness turn their backs upon me. Yet I scarcely blame them. Who could love a monster so hideous as Allan Breck?"

"A monster, Allan! a hideous monster! who would dare to call you so? I tell you, boy, that in spite of the change which disease may have wrought in your features, there is not a girl in the Western Highlands that would not be proud to become the wife of Allan, the heir of Norman Mac Diarmid's renown, and more than Norman Mac Diarmid's virtues. You are beloved, you must always be beloved, go where you may, and mix with whom you will."

"I would it were so, mother; for then would the thought of what I am, lose a portion, at least, of its bitterness."

"And is there any reason that you should doubt it? Have you received aught of unkindness at the hands of those from whom you were entitled to look for different treatment? Allan," continued she after a pause, during which she had watched with an observing eye every working of his countenance, "I know that there is some secret cause of grief within that bosom, and I have not lived so long in the world, without being able to form my own suspicions as to its cause. You and Marcelly have been too much together——"

"*Hush*, hush, mother!" cried he, interrupting her, and

raising his hand towards her lips, "say not one word about Marcelly. We were dear to each other, it is true, as children; but if the changes which time has wrought have occasioned a coldness on her side, or on mine—the one has no right to complain that the other is fickle."

"That will not do, Allan," replied his mother; "you cannot hide the truth from me. You love Marcelly, and"—here her voice faltered and she spoke in a low tone—"she does not return your passion?"

"I did not say so, mother," cried he, hurriedly; "it may be, or it may not be; but what is that to any one except myself?"

"It is every thing to me, Allan; every thing to one whose hopes of happiness in this world and in the next, are all bound up in her desire to witness the prosperity of her son. Did I not say truly, Marcelly has rejected your suit?"

"And if it were so, mother," replied Allan, dejectedly, "can I blame her for that? Oh, no, no! I blame only myself;—branded by Nature as an outcast from female society, how could I presume to lift my eyes to one so pure, so excellent, so beautiful?"

"I thought as much!" exclaimed his mother, speaking rather to herself than to him; "I conjectured that the extreme anxiety to reclaim him from his evil habits, the earnest desire to secure for him the benefits of a more polished education, was not wholly produced by a regard to his welfare or a wish to see him play the part that his father played. And Parson Neil, too, is he labouring to destroy the peace of a family which gave him protection when he stood most in need, and has afforded him shelter ever since? But it shall not avail. Allan, you love Marcelly?"

"Yes, mother, more than I love myself—more than I love even thee."

"And she has rejected you?"

"Even so, mother; she promises all that a sister can give, but she promises no more."

"And you are content to come into her terms: you relinquish your claims upon her hand, and are willing that she should bestow it on some more fortunate rival?"

"Mother," cried Allan, "I had not anticipated this from you. I did not believe that you could thus mock your son in his misery!"

"Mock thee, Allan? no, God is my witness, I but put to thee such questions as the state of the case seemed to suggest. *Tell me*, then, would the possession of Marcelly make *thee happy? Is* it the dread that thou mayest not possess

her that wrings from thee the salt tears that I behold now?"

"Were Marcelly mine, mother, I know not the circumstance, apart from the loss of thee, that could disturb my peace of mind for a moment. Without her, neither earth nor heaven possesses aught for which it were worth while to strive."

"Then she shall be thine. Not a word, boy!" continued she, worked up into enthusiasm; "I will listen to no expostulations, no objections, founded on romantic ideas of generosity. The girl will be too happy as thy wife, however much her capricious humour may spurn the idea now; and if a little gentle violence be necessary, why, no more will happen in her case, than has occurred in the cases of others, at least as deserving to be wooed and won. If she or her father lend a favourable ear to thy suit, I being thy spokeswoman, it is well; if not, may Heaven forsake me so surely as I fail to make her thine—no matter how great the sacrifices required in order to do so."

"But I will have no violence put upon her wishes, mother. I love Marcelly, it is true—even to madness: but to force the body when the mind goes not along with it!—no, mother, no! I may be wretched without her, but I should become ten times more wretched after such an act as that."

"Allan," replied his mother, solemnly, "have you any confidence in me? Do I deserve to be treated as your friend, or do I not?"

"I have no friend in the world, mother, except yourself."

"Then believe me when I say—and I will swear to the declaration if you wish—that in all my arrangements I look not more to your ultimate happiness than to hers. I brought her up with the same care that I bestowed upon yourself—I loved her as a child—I love her at this moment with an affection inferior only to that which binds me to you; and never could I think of inflicting a permanent wound upon her peace, were I even assured that by so doing I should secure for you the throne of a monarch. No, Allan; from my own experience I can attest, that to ensure the utmost degree of happiness in the married state, it is not necessary that the bride should experience at the altar the same ardent love that burns in the bridegroom's bosom. The best assorted matches are, on the contrary, those which, on the woman's part at least, begin in comparative indifference; for if the husband be kind—and you, Allan, cannot prove otherwise than kind—her love increases from day to day, and from month to month. Now Marcelly does not and

entertain for you any decided aversion. That is clearly impossible; indeed her declaration, that she feels for you as a sister, may render both our minds easy on that head; and if she do at first experience a reluctance to link her fate with yours, you must, and you will, by your conduct in future years, teach her to look back upon the existence of such a feeling with surprise. Will you, then, put yourself entirely into my hands?—Promise to obey my injunctions implicitly, and I pledge myself that Marcelly shall yet be to you, more than ever I was to your father."

"If I could trust to all this, mother."

"Trust! Allan; can you distrust your mother? Have I ever deceived or misled you since you were born?"

"No, mother, never; nor will you mislead me now. I put my case entirely into your hands—you shall do with me what you will."

"Then good night, my son; and a mother's blessing guard your slumbers! You will prosecute your journey in the morning, as it was intended that you should; only be prepared, when you receive your instructions from me, to obey them without inquiry, and without scruple.

So saying, she kissed his forehead, and in less than half an hour, the silence of universal sleep prevailed through the dwelling.

CHAPTER V.

It was a dark and drizzling morning, with a smart gale from the west, which drove the mist in heavy billows along the hills, when three rough and shaggy ponies, arriving in front of the house of Glenarroch, gave notice that the hour of Allan's departure was at hand. Three half-clad gillies, as the youths that hang idly about the residences of the Highland gentry are called, led the animals backwards and forwards, while a fourth, equipped in the garb of a lowland valet, stood apart, with folded arms, and an expression of *considerable self-importance* in his eye. The latter, indeed,

seemed so perfectly satisfied with himself, that it became, in a measure, necessary to convince others of their own inferiority; and he accordingly proceeded, after examining the animals for a few moments, to make the grooms aware how imperfectly they were acquainted with the mysteries of their craft.

"Ye haenna pitten on Glenarroch's saddle right, Joan," said he. "Ye're ta stupidest creatur that ever gaed aboot a house! Dinna ye see that the tae iron is twice as lang as the tither; and the curpins's no' buckled ava? Wha could pit sic a fule as you to look after a Christian horse?"

"Oo ay, Callum," was the answer; "ye're aye finding faut! Nae doubt it would ha' been better dune had ye pitten it on yourself; but Glenarroch's mair easy to please than ye are; and I serve him, no' you."

"And what's that ye've done with the Parson's wallees, Erick? Did ever body see wallees strapped on at sic a gate as that?"

"I dinna ken, Callum; but, may be, ye wad be pitten them before. We'll a' ken mair aboot thae matters, doubtless, when ye come back fra Edinburgh."

"And if the fule has na sewed rapes on my powny! What do ye think I am going to do with thae things? If there be na stirrup-arons to the fore, wad ye put off Glenarroch's body-servant wi' twa rapes?"

"Trowth, an ye may be right there, friend!" replied the third hostler. "The rape ought, may be, to be for your neck, no' for your heels, Callum."

This sally produced a laugh at Callum's expense, which he condescended to notice only by a contemptuous toss of the head; after which, he set his hat smartly on one side of his head, and walked away.

While this interesting conversation went on out of doors, Allan, his mother, and Parson Neil were assembled at their morning meal. It passed over in total silence, each of the parties appearing too much engrossed by matters of private consideration to find leisure for inquiring into the thoughts that gave occupation to the rest. On the countenance o the lady might be discovered traces of a deep and painfu anxiety—the expression of one who feels that some task c great difficulty has been undertaken, and that it must b carried through. Allan's countenance, again, though som what care-worn, might be said to wear less of gloom tha was habitual to it; while the Parson mused upon som thing which evidently partook of a mixed character. had spent an hour that morning in private with the

of his patron; and the subject of their conference, be it what it might, was such as to affect him powerfully. Nevertheless, he was the first to command the use of speech. Pulling a small, round piece of silver from his pocket, and examining its dark hands, he remarked that time wore apace, and that if they hoped to reach the inn where it was proposed that they should pass the night, the sooner they set out upon their journey the better. Allan and his mother assented rather by signs than words, and they all rose from the table.

We pass over the ceremony of taking leave, of which, it may with truth be stated, that a colder piece of acting has seldom been exhibited. One brief whisper—whether of admonition or warning, the low tone in which it was uttered hindered the bystanders from ascertaining—was all that passed between Allan and his mother, ere, kissing her cheek, he sprang into the saddle, and turned his horse's head towards the loch. The example was promptly followed both by the Parson and Callum. The former, indeed, lingered behind his charge, and, stooping down, said a few words to his patroness; but as she merely shook her head in reply, he made no effort to prolong the conversation. In five minutes he was at Allan's side, and with a leisurely pace they jogged on.

The route which the travellers pursued carried them a space of two or three miles by the margin of the loch, and in a direction opposite to that where stood the house of Ardmore. For some time the scenery, though magnificent throughout, became less and less rugged as they advanced, the hills shelving gradually backwards, and the turf assuming at every step a deeper and a richer hue, till arriving at a turn of the road which wound inwards from the coast, they entered abruptly into the gorge of one of the most extraordinary passes that are to be found in any country. A narrow track, or causeway, cut in the side of the mountain, passed upwards between a double range of black and precipitous rocks, which, totally bare of foliage, except where the ruins of a gnarled fir hung here and there over a corrie, reared their bald fronts to heaven. Now a peaked and lofty cone would tower into the sky, its summit displayed by fits and starts as the mist drifted along: now an enormous mass overhung them, in shapes the most fantastic, presenting to those unaccustomed to such spectacles the appearance of positive danger. About the centre of the glen lay a small but beautiful lake, from which issued a rivulet of clear water, that, leaping from pool to pool,

stream to stream, broke, with the sweetest of N
music upon the extraordinary silence of the place. Y
roar of the waterfall was not the only sound which t
of the listener might catch. Wherever the stranger
his steps, he will hear, amid the pause of the stream,
stant tinkling, as if stones were continually breaking
from the precipices overhead, and rolling down in
valley.

He who is suddenly introduced to such a scene
becomes involuntarily the slave of sensations, whi
they of wonder or of awe, or of some other passion mo
timately connected with our spiritual existence, take
from him the desire—we had almost said the facu
speech. We breathe, indeed, but it is like men br
into contact with beings of a higher order; for the ab
loneliness that prevails gives our imagination power t
ple the very air around us we know not with what.
must, to a greater or less degree, be the case at all se
whether of sunshine or of gloom; but when the mis
rolling thick, or the winds sweeping them onwards—
now they shroud in utter obscurity objects, however n
hand, now open out a momentary glimpse of chasm
bristling crags, deep gullies, and dark ravines, he mu
made of impenetrable stuff, indeed, who experiences n
position to place some confidence in traditions that
marked out such spots as, in ages long gone by, the a
of beings of a higher order than man. Be this, howev
it may, no fact can be more fully ascertained, than tha
inhabitants of mountainous countries are almost alwa
perstitious; and if the circumstance be not referrible
wild nature of the scenery amid which they live, w
least, know not where to turn for a solution of the pro

From the infirmity (for so we presume it ought
termed) to which almost all his countrymen of the last
tury were subject, Allan Breck was not free; and eve
Parson, notwithstanding his experience in life, see
since his settlement in Glenarroch, to fall occasionally
the same mode of thinking. With the former, howe
belief in the reality of spiritual visitations operated in
dering him uneasy as often as the subject occurred t
mind; with the latter, no stronger feeling existed,
does, perhaps, exist at times, in all men. But though
was this wide distinction in the bases on which the s
stition of the travellers rested, both seemed, on the pr
occasion, to turn their thoughts into one channel.
had ridden a space of some miles without exchanging

ıen Allan, pushing his horse close to that of his com-
nion, entered abruptly upon the subject.

"If it be false that beings are permitted to visit this
rth of an order superior to ourselves, how comes it that
all ages a contrary belief has prevailed? Whence does
arise, that, even now, with all the lights of modern science
ound us, a conviction to the contrary should be so strongly
ıpressed upon the minds of men in general?"

"He were a bold sceptic that would assert positively that
e beings of whom you speak have no existence," replied
e Parson; "and he were scarcely less bold that would
ny altogether that they may be occasionally permitted to
terfere in the affairs of men. But of this, Allan, we may
st assured, that the instances of such visitations, if such
ere be, are few, indeed, inasmuch as the ordinary laws of
ture are not to be reversed, except on great and momen-
us occasions. If the fate of an empire hang in the balance,
see no reason why the issue of the trial may not be super-
turally indicated now, as it was in times of old; but no
an can seriously believe that spirits are raised merely to
ghten women and children."

"I never supposed the contrary," rejoined Allan. "The
pose of the dead were something very different from what
seems to be, were they liable to be called from their
aves for purposes so unworthy. But, besides the cases to
hich you refer, may not particular families be watched by
eir familiar spirits, as James the Third, they say, was
atched by his? Nay, what do you think of our own Ban-
ee? Are you inclined to credit the tales that are told
it?"

"This much I firmly believe," answered the Parson, "that
oll, the ancient ruler of the country, perished miserably
the hand of your great ancestor; and that a notion has
er since prevailed, that his ghost appears just before some
avy calamity is about to befall the Mac Diarmids. But,
I never saw the spirit, nor heard him, my credulity ex-
nds no farther."

"Then will you witness to-day what you never witnessed
fore," exclaimed Allan; "for if the tales be true that are
rrent in the glen, I hear, even now, the wailing that pre-
de [illegible] visitations."

Th[illegible] travellers reined in their steeds and looked eagerly
wards a corrie on their right hand, along the brow of
ıich a cloud of dense fog was sailing. A low feeble cry,
ne[illegible] between a whistle and a moan, came distinctly
[illegible] the blast; and the breathing, both of Allan and

his attendant, Callum, thickened as they took it in. The latter, indeed, who had gradually edged close to Ps Neil, presented a pitiable spectacle of superstitious ho as, with cheeks pale, and eyes distended, he muttered, voice scarcely audible—"God preserve us! ta Botach G But the Parson, though unmanned for an instant, shoo with the rapidity of thought a weakness, of which, ha displayed it elsewhere, he would have been hes ashamed. "That is but the echo of the wind among rocks," said he, "a sound which, I doubt not, is alwa be heard as often as the weather sets in from the st quarter. Besides, Allan, who ever heard of a ghos Botach Glas, making his appearance in broad day?"

"Elsewhere, such visitations may be rare," replied A "but here—hark! what call ye that sound?"

As he spoke, there arose from the same quarter anc and still more audible cry, as of men and women's vc mingling in a lament for the dead. By and by the scr of a bagpipe broke in upon the chant, which became e moment more and more distinct, till the mist, opening a once, displayed to the view of the travellers a funeral p descending at a slow pace the brow of an opposite hill. have hurried forward without saluting the bier, would l been to incur a charge under which no Highlander w willingly lie—that of dishonouring the dead. The tl horsemen therefore continued stationary, their thoughts ing entirely diverted from the subjects which had previ ly employed them, till the funeral party, after traver the bottom of the glen, arrived on the same side of stream, and stood before them. The bearers had rested coffin on a little knoll, and were gathering stones v which to rear a cairn, when, putting their horses in mot Allan and his companion drew towards them. The l son raised his three-cornered hat, and was about to add a few words of comfort to a gray-headed man, the exc of whose emotion pointed him out as the chief mourn when the eye of the latter fell suddenly upon Allan, the form of his visage was changed.

"Hast thou met me in my very teeth, man of bloo cried he. "Is it not enough to kill? Art thou ... to sult the living and to triumph over the dead: or ha ... l livered thee into my hand?

He sprang forward as he spoke, and seizing ... Allan's horse, strove to back him over a precip... sheer and abrupt many feet from the edge of th... was the act of a moment; yet Allan's presence

took him not; for he threw himself from the saddle, and stood in the middle of the path-way.

"I might have shot thee, as easily as I have saved myself, old man," said he; "but there is blood enough of thine on my head already. Go to—I never meant to insult thy feelings: but as to him whom ye bear to his grave, though I lament his fate, I take God to witness that I am but the innocent cause of it. What I did was done in self-defence."

"It is false, Allan Breck, and thou knowest that it is false: but pass onwards now, for were I to slay thee here, thou wouldst escape long years of misery and crime. Live then to be a disgrace to thy name and thy country—live to be a traitor, dishonoured, and abhorred of thy clan—be an outcast from thy native land, and perish among strangers, with the curse of a childless father weighing thee to hell!"

The old man, as he uttered this malediction, gave up the bridle which he had hitherto held, and made a sign to his party that they should resume the procession. They obeyed him without speaking a word; and though they threw looks of deadly meaning on Allan as they passed, a sense of duty restrained them from offering to him the slightest personal violence.

All this passed in a shorter space of time than we have spent in narrating it; consequently, neither Parson Neil nor Callum could take other part in the transaction than to interpose themselves between Allan and his irritated opponent. The winding up of the affair, moreover, being as abrupt as the other stages in its progress, the opportunity even of inquiring into its cause was wanting, till the funeral having passed in one direction, and themselves in another, a considerable length of road divided them. Then, however, the Parson, though he still laboured under the excitement of feelings strongly agitated, demanded an explanation of the scene to which he had just been a witness.

"Do ye call it a scene?" replied Allan, in a tone of forced gaiety: "for my own share, I call it a complete farce. The old fellow played his part badly, I allow; but the farce was a good one, notwithstanding the want of talent in the principal performer."

"Allan," replied the chaplain, sternly, "where the blood of a fellow-creature has been shed, and that by violence, the mind must be depraved, indeed, that can find scope for irony. I could not have credited any lips except your own had *they dared to assert*, that Allan Mac Diarmid was capable, *first of killing*, and then of laughing at the deed."

"*And who laughs* at the deed?" answered Allan, fiere

"I told old Duncan that I lamented the mishap, and I tel you the same. But if my life be in danger, am I not at li- berty to defend it?"

"Unquestionably you are, Allan, provided it be in danger but it is not every rash gesture, or threatening speech, tha may be honestly met by a mortal blow. I heard both you assertion and old Duncan's denial."

"Parson Neil," replied Allan, reining up his pony, and turning with a look of angry defiance towards his compa- nion, "the time has long gone by since you have had any right to inquire into my proceedings, farther than I might choose to make you acquainted with them. While I was a child, your authority might be absolute; but I am not a child now, and I acknowledge no fealty to you, or to any other man living. The youth chose to cross my path need- lessly—and what is more, I would have spared him if I could. I struck no mortal blow. If he died by my dirk, he threw himself upon it—I did not drive it into him."

"God forgive you, Allan!" rejoined the chaplain. "I have long been aware of your dissolute habits and unworthy proceedings: but not till now have I looked upon you as one defiled, in any degree, with the guilt of homicide. May the old man's curse be scattered by the winds ere it reach the throne of Heaven!"

"Let the old ass curse as he may," exclaimed Allan, care- lessly. "I value neither his curses nor his blessings. It is a monstrous bore, I admit, that so foul an accident should have happened; but the fault rests entirely with the slain. But a truce to so dull a subject. I would rather hear, an you will, some account of the great city towards which we are wending—something anent the manners of these Sax- ons, of whom you all speak so lightly, though you seem to regard them as a class of people every way competent to improve yourselves."

"Then you must bridle your curiosity, till you find some other means of gratifying it; for I have no heart to discuss with you any such unimportant topic."

"Please yourself, good Parson," answered Allan, with a air of assumed indifference. "When you regain your goo humour, I am at hand to share it. In the mean while, presume we ride forward independently."

So saying, he began to hum a Gaelic air, interrupting himself from time to time, by an appeal to Callum respect- ing some feats of activity which the one or the other had performed; nor was it till the greater portion of the journey was completed, that the Parson so far overcam indignation as to lead to a renewal of the conversation

CHAPTER VI.

ER clearing the pass, within the defiles of which the ture alluded to in the preceding chapter occurred, our lers found themselves upon an extensive table-land, , stretching away to the eastward as far as the eye reach, presented the appearance of a gloomy and end- aot of brown and barren heath. Not a bush or tree its shadow over the desert, except that here and a clump of aged firs uplifted their giant stems, which ıad left as monuments of forests long ago mouldered rgotten. It is true, that the utter desolation of the was varied, if not relieved, by the occurrence of nu- ıs lakes, of which one, at least, appeared to be several in circumference; but a tract more perfectly cheer- a region more thoroughly devoid of all character, be- hat of sheer gloom, because of absolute sterility, we he most fertile imagination to conceive. When we ıoreover, that the most depressed point in the panora- easured something about two thousand feet above the of the sea, we shall have probably said enough to give aders a tolerably clear insight into the nature of ns, at least, of the scenery peculiar to the Western ands.

drizzling showers which attended them during the part of their journey, began, as they approached the of the glen, to settle into decided rain, and ere they aversed half the moor, the clouds were emptying them- in torrents, which a furious wind from the south and drove directly into their faces. Against such weather, h a degree of altitude, neither cloak nor plaid affords ightest shelter; and hence, before they had accom- d half their journey, the wayfarers were thoroughly ted. Their horses, moreover, kept with difficulty to ast, made way but slowly, and evening was closing in ey reached the inn, or rather hovel, where it was re- that they should bait. Yet it seemed as if the incle- *ces to which* they were equally subject, served to

smooth away the ascerbities of temper under which they had hitherto laboured; for, in exact proportion to the growing violence of the storm, the good humour of the Parson returned. We are not prepared to say that reason and reflection had not their share in bringing this about. Parson Neil was possessed of an understanding too clear not to be aware, that if you desire to reclaim any one, more especially a youth, from the errors which he may have committed, you must not begin by teaching him to believe that his case is desperate; and hence, in all probability, not less than in obedience to that law of nature which renders partners in affliction tolerant the one of the other, he gradually relaxed from his severity. Of his own accord, he adverted to the topic to which Allan some time previously would have drawn him, and long ere the day's dreary journey came to a close, he had recited many a tale descriptive of the Scottish capital, and of the kind of society to which his pupil was about to be introduced.

It is unnecessary to follow, in detail, the particulars of an excursion which was not marked by the occurrence of any extraordinary adventure. Let it suffice to state, that the storm of wind and rain gradually abated as night drew on; that the travellers rose, with fresh spirits, to resume their journey, when the dawn of the following day came in beautifully bright, and that noon found them wending their way cheerily along the margin of a fresh-water loch, that lay like a mirror amid a circle of green hills, over the sides and brows of which numerous flocks were grazing. Then came a dark and rugged defile, totally different indeed from their own wild glen, but still exceedingly striking; where the narrow road wound along the edge of a ravine, at the gorge of which the lake emptied itself by a rapid river, and a skreen of thick foliage, while it sheltered them from the burning rays of the sun, confined all power of vision within the stretch of a very narrow compass. It was the last specimen of Alpine grandeur which they were destined to behold, at least for the present; for, on clearing that pass, there burst upon them a scene, on which Allan could not but pause to look with feelings wholly inexplicable.

Born in a region where the word *plain* is scarcely understood, and the term valley means nothing more than a glen or hollow, overshadowed by mountains, the astonishment of Allan, when, on turning an angle in the road, he beheld spread out before him an extent of cultivated fields, which appeared to have no other boundary than the horizon, deprived him of the faculty of speech. Immediately beneath

him lay a village or small town, sheltered from the north and west by ridges of rocks, and washed, as it were, by the waters of a lovely stream, that flowed with a quiet current along its edge. Beyond, again, were corn-fields and meadows, groves and hedge-rows, with here and there a hamlet, farm-house, or gentleman's seat; while, from the very centre of this mighty flat, rose sheer and perpendicular, the towers and battlements of an ancient fortress. Allan gazed long and silently upon the scene, so different in all its features from any to which he had hitherto been accustomed, and then, turning to his companion, demanded, rather by looks than words, some explanation of what he could not but regard as an absolute phenomenon in nature.

"There, Allan, lies the Low Country," said his tutor, with a smile, "the fertile fields which our forefathers once owned, till, as our bards tell us, the Saxons came, and drove them back to contend for freedom, amid the mountain fastnesses. That pile on which you are gazing is the castle of Stirling, the place that we must reach before the sun goes down; and, therefore, so soon as you have satisfied your curiosity, it may be well if we push forward."

Allan made no answer, for his thoughts were still too much abroad to admit of his carrying on a common conversation, so they pressed their horses to a trot, and entered the last village that lies within what is called the Highland line, just as the church clock was striking two.

Having halted a couple of hours to refresh, the travellers were again in the saddles, and pursuing their journey with an easy pace. A delightful ride of five Scotch miles, along the banks of the silver Teath, carried them to a stone bridge of three arches; about a long gun-shot from which stood the ruins of a baronial fortalice, the residence, in former times, of the Regent Murray. This they crossed, after which their route lay first through the heart of an extensive moor, and then amid fields rich with waving corn, while more directly in their front up rose the battlements of Stirling Castle, crowning, as with a coronet of masonry, the summit of the bold and rocky eminence, along the eastern face of which the ancient town is built. Insensibly, Allan quickened his pace, a movement which his companion exhibited, for awhile, no disposition to restrain; but, as they neared the base of the hill, the latter suddenly reined in his pony, and motioning to Allan to follow his example, gazed with an earnest, and, as it appeared, an anxious eye towards the fortress.

"*We are no longer in the Highlands, Allan,*" said he, "*and there are many good reasons why we should not*

little more caution than we have hitherto done. It wer awkard conclusion to our travels were we to get imm within these old walls. Neither the son of Norman Diarmid nor Neil Macpherson are likely to meet with m kindness at the hands of the Whigs; so pull up, if please, till we ascertain how far the coast is clear."

"I was not aware that we ran the smallest risk of an ance," replied Allan, "nor can I comprehend, even n from what quarter danger should arise. I am absolu unknown at Stirling, and so, I presume, are you."

"Perhaps I may, and perhaps I may not," rejoined the Parson; "but in either case, common prudence requires that I should not heedlessly run you or myself, or any other individual connected with Norman Mac Diarmid, into the power of the Elector of Hanover's red-coats. Your father was no favourite with the Whigs, and the Whigs, they say, are apt to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, to many generations. But here comes one who will tell us how the land lies."

As he uttered these words, Allan looked up, and beheld a man descending leisurely by a steep road or pass, which, skirting the base of the rock on which the castle stood, led downwards into the plain. The stranger, who was dressed in the ordinary costume of the period, had the air of a respectable tradesmen of the better sort,—he might be a member of the town council, or even a bailie,—for his snuff-coloured coat was clean, and his ruffles and frill could not have been worn many days. There was nothing, however, as far as Allan could perceive, by which to tell him, at a yard's distance, from any other burgher, unless, indeed, the circumstance that he wore a small white rose in his bosom could be construed into a mark of peculiarity; yet he seemed to bear about him some masonic emblem, of which the full force was immediately acknowledged. A sign of recognition passed between the Parson and him, while yet they were a couple of bow-shot apart, and as both parties quickened their pace immediately on the signal being answered, the lapse of a few seconds brought them together.

"We have entirely failed," said the stranger, in a half whisper, "and the enemy are now doubly on the alert. Every thing went on well to the last, but just as the plot was ripe for explosion, some miscreant betrayed it, and the governor has ever since kept such a look out, that a mouse cannot stir without being observed."

"You were extremely rash," replied the Parson, '... to say the least of it, altogether premature. The time

not yet come for action, and now all must be done over again, under the manifest disadvantage of suspicions excited, and vigilance called into play. I suppose that strangers from the hills are examined, and that it is scarcely safe for us to rest here even till to-morrow?"

"It would have been well had you spent the night nearer the line, so as to pass this hot-bed of whiggery without halting; but we are not yet entirely awake. Keep clear of the main streets,—content yourselves with such accommodation as you can find outside the port; and if you take the road again betimes in the morning, so much the better. You know the town as well as I, so pass round, and take care how you bring yourselves unnecessarily into notice."

The stranger passed on as he concluded this speech, while the Parson, instead of advancing by the track immediately before him, turned abruptly to the left, and beckoned to Allan and his attendant to follow. They obeyed without asking any questions, and found themselves traversing a rough road, which wound under the base of the hill, till it brought them suddenly to a point where the Forth was spanned by an antique bridge. The town now lay before them, rising street above street, as each occupied a portion of the eminence more lofty than another; while a battery of heavy cannon looked down from the castle, so as to command entirely this the only approach from the north. But to avoid the town, not to find out the most convenient means of access, seemed to be the Parson's purpose. He still held to the left, skirting the suburbs, till he had completed more than a half circle round the place, and at last halted beside a house of public entertainment just beyond a port, or gateway, which cut off the liberties of the borough towards the south.

The house in question was evidently of that order which drovers, carriers, and persons engaged in the meaner kinds of trade are in the habit of frequenting. A row of carts, laden with bales, stood in front of an arched passage, beyond which, in all probability, lay the stables; while a sign that swung above the low door, represented, or was meant to represent, a Highlander and Lowlander in the act of shaking hands with extraordinary good-will. Beneath this curious piece of art, ran, on one side, a legend, which told that "Jean Mac Raby dealt in porter, ale, and British spirits;" while the reverse gave assurance that there was to be found within "good accommodation for man and beast." Such was the kind of hotel before which the Parson pulled up, with *the expression in his* countenance of one who feels that he

is secure of a cordial welcome; and his example being followed by Allan and Callum, the tired steeds were relieved of their loads, which they had by this time borne much longer than could be agreeable either to them or their riders.

The clattering of horses' hoofs, followed, as in the present instance it was, by the application of Parson Neil's riding-whip to the open door, soon attracted the attention of the careful landlady, whose shrill voice was heard calling loudly upon her helpmate, and combining, in happy union, the accents of reproof with those of exhortation.

"Where are ye, Sandy?—what are ye doing there?—dinna ye hear folk knocking on ye? Deil be in me if ever I kent sic a lazy sumph! Rin, man, rin! like a gude chield, and lead the horses yont to the stable! I'll see to the gentlemen mysel'."

As the last sentence was uttered, the portly figure of a female emerged from the lobby, closely followed in the rear by that of a man, lean, sallow, sharp-featured and apparently about forty years of age, with an eye that twinkled with sly humour and impertinent curiosity. The latter took the bridles which were thrown to him by Callum, not without a leer of peculiar import, which became more and more marked as he surveyed both the ponies and their furniture, from muzzle to haunch, and from shoulder to fetlock. But a greater than he being present to ask questions for herself, Sandy probably anticipated that any interference on his part would lead only to rebuke; he therefore led off his charge in silence, while the female proceeded at once to recommend her own accommodations, and to throw out such feelers as might lead to something like a ground of conjecture touching the quality and business of her guests.

"Ye'll hae ridden far the day, gentlemen, and ye'll want some supper afore ye gang till your beds—for beds ye'll want, nae doubt. And though I say it mysel, ye couldna hae pitten up at ony public in a' the town where better beds are to be had. Ye'll be frae the hills, Ise warrant; frae the Westland country, may be—or aboon Callender, ony how?"

"We have ridden some distance," replied the Parson, as he and Allan followed the mistress into a small, sanded apartment, "and are not in a humour to find fault with any such food as you may be able to furnish. Of beds, too, we stand something in need; and I know that they are always excellent here. But how is the mistress?"

"The mistress is well, muckle obliged to ye for the inquiry. But wha way ye be that speer so kindly after her?"

"Oh, she and I are very old acquaintances. I have

known her these twenty years, and shall be happy to shake hands with her again for 'auld lang syne.'"

"'Trouth, an' I doubt that, friend! At least, I'm sure the mistress has nae recollection o' you, whatever you may hae o' her. But she's no' the less wulling to mak you comfortable."

"I dare say we shall recognise one another when we meet; but in the mean while we shall be very glad to see the supper of which you spoke."

"'Od, I'm no' thinking ye'll meet muckle mair than ye hae met already. Gin ye hae ony particular business wi' the mistress, ye may as weel tell it to me, for I am a' that ye'll get for ane in the Salutation."

"Are you mistress of the Salutation?" asked the Parson, a little embarrassed.

"'Deed am I! for want o' a better."

"And where is honest Mrs. Mac Raby; she that kept the house twelve years ago?"

"Honest! ca' ye her? It was a vera honest trick, nae doubt, to hae meetings of Papists, and Prelatists, and Jacobites, night after night, in this vera chaumer, plotting and contriving to tak possession o' the castle and put King George aff his throne. But the silly fules couldna keep their ain counsel. Honest Jean Mac Raby's safe enough noo; and the concern's fallen into better hands, praise be blessed! But what wad your honour like to hae for supper? We've a' thing in the house; baith ait cakes and wheaten bread, and fools, and sa't herring, forby rizzered haddocks, and flesh meat o' every description."

"Whatever can be first got ready, good dame. A couple of fowls will serve our purpose extremely well. But how comes the name of Jean Mac Raby still upon your sign?"

"Oo 'deed, I couldna be fashed to tak it doon; and mair na that, my ain name's Mac Raby too; though Sanders, auld Jean's nevoy by the father's side, sud hae the honour, doubtless. But we just couldna be fashed making ony changes."

"Well, well! you will send in our supper as soon as you can; and in the mean while tell your hostler to look well after the horses. We must be on foot again early in the morning."

"We'll see about that," muttered the hostess to herself, as she closed the door behind her. "Ye may be honest folk for aught I ken to the contrair; but gin ye kent Jean Mac Raby sae weel, there is some cause to doubt it. However, *yese get your supper*, and pay for't too."

While the landlady was thus exerting her inquisitorial talents upon the masters, her helpmate, Saunders, was equally zealous in fishing for information from Callum; who, like a prudent groom, chose to see his cattle fed and tended, ere he quitted the stable.

"Ye'll hae lived wi' thae gentlemen since ye were a callant noo," quoth Sanders, "and I dar say find it a vera gude place. Highland gentlemen are kind to their servants at a' times."

"Sae they till me," replied Callum, "but we're no frae the Highlands."

"They're unco like Highland beas ye ride, ony how; and yere tongue's no' this gait awa."

"Oo ay, the beas are frae Maccullanmore's country—he's vera grit with my maister, and sends him horses and knout in a present, noo and than."

"And ye'll be for the south kintra, Ise warrant."

"Tweel are we; we're gawn to Edinborough to attend the college—he's coming out a minister yon ane."

The conversation had proceeded thus far, when the voice of Sanders' better half was heard, requiring, in no subdued tone, an interview with her helpmate. Sanders left his charge in a trice, and running to the stable door, gave his undivided attention to the commands of one who was seldom disobeyed. Of what nature these might be, Callum, though he listened closely, was unable fully to ascertain. He overheard, indeed, such expressions as the following—"No vera canny"—"dinna like the glower o' them"—"the Provost behoved to ken"—"sae strict a proclamation;"—but both parties spoke low, and Callum's vigilance afforded him no insight into the purport of the discourse. At last, however, the consultation drew to a close, the dame bestowing, as it appeared, a parting charge upon her submissive spouse. "Ye'll tak your time about it, Sanders. Ye'll no stir till they get their supper; for be they what they may, it's nae use keeping a public, if we dinna serve our customers and get paid for it."

CHAPTER VII.

A CAREFUL observer might have traced in the working of Parson Neil's countenance, a slight expression of anxiety, as soon as the closed door left him at liberty to indulge his own thoughts free from the intrusive impertinence of the landlady. He gazed round the little room with the eye of one to whom external objects are familiar, but who misses something which he has been accustomed to see, and the absence of which gives pain. Nevertheless he said nothing, but rising from his chair, proceeded to the window. It commanded a view of the street—a wide but inelegant road, hemmed in on either hand by low mean houses, and terminated at one end by an antique embattled gateway, in front of which a town's officer, or member of the burgher guard, paced backwards and forwards, formidable alike from the cock of his three-cornered hat, and the enormous lochaber axe that graced his shoulder. But that which chiefly attracted the Parson's attention, was the gaunt figure of Sanders, who, emerging from beneath the archway of the inn, made a sign with his hand, as if to acknowledge some final instructions, and walked leisurely towards the port.

A strong suspicion that all was not right, flashed across the mind of Parson Neil. He turned round, and was about to express his apprehensions to his companion, when the door opened, and Mrs. Mac Raby, bearing in her hands the ordinary preliminaries to a substantial repast, entered.

"The fools are a' sitten," said she, "barin the auld cock, and he's out at his travels; so I cookit ye up some nice hot minced collups, that might supper a lord."

As she said this, she spread a remarkably clean cloth upon the table, over which were speedily arranged an "*ashet*" of minced meat, well seasoned with pepper and

salt—as well as plates, horn-handled knives and forks, bread, cheese, butter, and other viands. To these, permission being first of all sought and obtained, she took care to add a measure of excellent brandy, with a magnum bottle of claret; after which, wishing them "a gude appetite," she again withdrew.

"So far so good," said Allan, drawing his seat cheerfully towards the well-filled board. "We might go farther and fare worse, Parson; what say ye?"

"Only this, that I would give more than the worth of my best gown and cassock, that we were some miles farther, no matter how we fared."

"Why, what is it that ails you?—you are not the same man since you began to breathe the air of the Lowlands. For my part, I think the new Lucky Mac Raby plays the part of hostess to admiration, though, to be sure, I had not the pleasure of knowing her predecessor."

"A truce to your raillery, Allan," said his companion, gravely, "and attend to what a stern necessity alone compels me to communicate. Had you been different from what you are, it would not have devolved upon me, in this place, and at this hour, to tell you, that, during some months back, affairs involving the most important results have been under discussion throughout Scotland. The son of your father ought to have taken in these discussions a leading part, but for that you chose to unfit yourself, and now you must learn, for the first time, that the old game will shortly be played over again, though upon far more equal terms. In the mean while, however, certain friends to the cause, more zealous than discreet, have, it appears, thrown aside the mask too soon, and the suspicions of the Government are, in consequence, awakened. Now, though you are perfectly innocent of all designs against the Elector, (your father could not say as much at your age,) your very name will condemn you, and I know not what they will not do to me, provided they can once lay their clutches on me. Yet, unless I greatly deceive myself, there is an even chance that this same fate will befall us both ere the night set in. You observed what our amiable hostess said concerning her predecessor?"

"To be sure I did: and what then?"

"Simply this. The Lucky Mac Raby, whom I had hoped to find here, was a firm friend to the cause; her house was well known to all the Jacobite gentlemen both of the Highlands and the Low Country, and many a meeting has been held to concert measures in this very room. She has been

; it seems, and the secrets of the prison-house re-
f course. Do you guess the result?"
I, for the life of me!"
rtunately, I claimed acquaintance with her; my
was evidently not lost upon her hopeful niece; and,
l, Allan, I enjoy the satisfaction, at this moment, of
ing the speedy arrival of a magistrate's warrant to
both."
a it is well," replied Allan, coolly, "that though the
ave been laid aside, the pistols and rapier are forth-
Let no rascally officer show his nose within that
e value his skin."
as exactly my anticipation of this," rejoined the
"that induced me so far to trust you. You would
here resistance were perfectly useless; for what
e do? Kill a wretched emissary perhaps, and be
ter all. No, no, Allan! We are in a scrape, it is
l enough of itself, but which the shedding of blood
nly render a thousand times worse. We must trust
nce, not to force, for getting out of it again. I must
of you, therefore, to give me up your weapons, lest
urry of the moment you should be tempted to use

expressed himself exceedingly unwilling to come
; arrangement. He would pledge his word that no
should be made of them; he would even submit to be
, provided violence were not offered to his person; but
ve himself of the means of repelling that, was what
l not stomach. The Parson was, however, firm, and
obstinate as he might have been with any other indi-
reluctantly gave way. His pistols and sword were,
equence, handed over to his more peaceable compa-
ho laid them carefully aside in a closet; after which
friends addressed themselves, though with a zest
iat diminished, to their supper.
meal passed over in quiet, and, of the claret, a consi-
portion was consumed, without the occurrence of
ident calculated to confirm their suspicions. Twi-
ideed, had set in, and Allan, elevated in some de-
liberal potations, was beginning to rally his compa-
his fears, when a sudden rush of footsteps, and a
voices in the street, drew his attention to the win-
He looked out, and beheld, to his dismay, a crowd of
assembled beside the inn door, conspicuous among
was a detachment of soldiers. The latter, under the
e of a personage whose dress and demeanour suffi-

ciently marked the sheriff's officer, halted beside the gateway, where a couple of sentinels posted themselves; while the remainder, penetrating beneath the arch, were immediately lost to his view. But Allan was not left many minutes in suspense as to the probable design of these preparations. The passage outside the little parlour where they were seated rang to the heavy tread of armed men; and the thump of musket-buts upon the floor was distinctly audible. Immediately, the door flew open, and the officer, closely followed by Sanders and his spouse, and supported by four grenadiers, with fixed bayonets, stood before them.

"That's them, Master Gruppit," quoth the landlady, holding a lighted candle aloft: "that's the men ye want. I'll no' say that they are no' honest gentlemen, though they did speer after my good anty; but the Provost's wull is to be obeyed. And I hope the supper and wine they hae had, as weel as the corn for their horses, will be paid for, somehow or other."

The officer now advanced, and explained to the parties that he was the bearer of a warrant, which required that they would instantly appear before the Provost, in order to give an account of themselves. Had the precaution not been taken of removing from the younger of the two all means of resisting this order, it is probable that blood would have been shed in the attempt to carry it into force; but the consciousness that he was unarmed kept Allan quiet, while the Parson readily, and without the semblance of hesitation, expressed himself willing to follow his conductors. They were accordingly led forth—not manacled, for their behaviour was perfectly peaceable, but closely guarded—and marched, amid a gaping and wondering throng, towards the dwelling of the chief magistrate.

Daylight had by this time completely disappeared, at least so much so as during the summer months it ever does in a latitude so far north as that of Stirling. Thou[illegible] us, therefore, that they were conducted beneath the arched porch or gateway, and along a steep and winding street of very irregular construction, the prisoners could judge little of the course which they took, till they suddenly stopped short at the door of a mean-looking house, about half way up the face of the acclivity. For a moment or two they were left here in charge of the guard—the mob becoming every instant more dense, as well as more speculative—while the Messenger (for so the sheriff's officer is called) went in to ascertain the wishes of the worshipful Provost. But the delay was not of a very distressing duration. The Messenger

soon returned; and the prisoners being ordered to follow him, they, with a portion of their military attendants, entered the domicile.

A solitary rushlight (one of sixteen to a pound) standing upon a counter, made our adventurers imperfectly aware that they had passed through a shop, from the roof of which hung numerous parcels of candles, as the sides were fitted up with boxes, probably charged with contents equally lucid. Beyond this was a small closet or back shop, measuring, perhaps, ten feet in length by six in width, and communicating with the outer shop mainly by a door, but not less efficiently by means of a window, composed of a single pane of glass. There sat the Provost—Provost Dalgleish—a man of strong Whig principles and extraordinary self-importance; small, indeed, of stature, and empty of understanding, but not the less valuable in his own eyes. This eminent specimen of civic wisdom occupied a huge arm-chair, withdrawn, as beseemed his importance, a considerable space from the contamination of touch; while close to the table sat the town-clerk, Mr. Ebenezer Littlejohn, having writing materials spread in great abundance before him.

A brief pause followed the introduction of the prisoners, during which the magistrate and they surveyed one another with looks expressive, on the one part, of consequential curiosity; on the other, of something like surprise, if not contempt. At length the Provost began his inquiries into the nature of their business in Stirling, the points from whence they came, and whither they were going—as well as touching their names, qualities, occupations, and designs in riding the country thus mysteriously during a season of more than common anxiety. To the first of these questions a direct and explicit answer was given. They were merely birds of passage, halting for the night to refresh their horses, and intending to pursue their journey in the morning; but with respect to the others, somewhat more of caution was observed. They did not deny that they were from the hills; indeed, they avowed that they were natives of Argyleshire, and that they were proceeding to the capital, for the purpose of completing the education of the young gentleman, to whom the elder acted in capacity of tutor. Then again, as to any mystery, or attempt at mystery, that was absolutely derided; while the intelligence that the present times were pregnant with sources of uneasiness, was received with well-feigned astonishment.

"And now, sir," continued the Parson, for he, as may be imagined, was the spokesman, "permit me, in my turn, to

ask why two of the King's subjects should thus be brought before you as prisoners, without the slightest ground of accusation, or even of reasonable suspicion against them?"

The Provost and town-clerk stared at one another, as if thrown aback by so blunt a question; and the former, who was evidently, like all mean men in authority, not less cowardly than insolent, changed colour, while his eye fell under the stern gaze of his prisoners. The official, however, who appeared somewhat under the influence of strong drink, exhibited no disposition to abate one jot of his dignity.

"The King's proclamation bears ye oot, Provost Dalgleish; ye are justified in sending them baith to the Tolbooth; for, beyond a doubt, they 're strangers here, and Deil be in me gin I ken their names yet."

"Oo ay, gentlemen, your names, your names," quoth the Provost; "ye haenna gien us yere names: what do they ca' ye?"

"We have no cause to be ashamed of our names," replied the Parson, "nor can we experience the slightest reluctance to communicate them; but we wish, first of all, to be made acquainted with the nature of the charge under which we have been thus unceremoniously dealt with."

"Ye've naething to do wi' that, Provost," interposed the man of law; "ye're absolute monarch here ony how; and being required, on information lodged, to tak up a' suspicious characters, ye're no' bound to explain to them why ye do so. Let them gie an account o' themselves."

"Oo ay," cried the Provost, "gie an account o' yourselves. It's for that ye're brought here, according to the King's proclamation."

"I have told you already, sir," replied the Parson, "that we are gentlemen from Argyleshire, proceeding on our lawful business to Edinburgh. You are perfectly welcome to examine our baggage and papers, and if you find any thing there capable of exciting a shadow of suspicion against us, your own sense of duty will tell you how it becomes you to act."

"Where's Sanders Mac Raby?" ejaculated the Writer: "what was't ye telt me when ye got the warrant?"

"They speer'd unco friendly for my aunty," said Sanders, "and my wife thought that ye boot to ken that sic folk were in her house."

"Noo then, sir," exclaimed the Writer, looking as wise as men in a state of more than half intoxication generally do "what say ye to that? Ask them hoo they cam to speer after that auld Jacobite limmer; Provost, ask them that."

"Oo ay," said the Provost, "what kent ye aboot auld Lucky Mac Raby,—what kent ye aboot her?"

"Nothing more than men generally do about the keepers of taverns, which in the course of their travels they may chance to frequent," replied Parson Neil. "I (for this young gentleman was never in Stirling till to-day) have passed through this town before, and it so happens that I put up, twelve years ago, at the sign of the Salutation. Is there any thing extraordinary in that?"

"But your servant says ye 're no' fra the Highlands," interposed Sanders.

"Oo ay," interposed the Provost, "what say ye to that? Your servant denies that ye came fra the Highlands."

"If my servant perceives that impertinent questions are put to him," said Allan, "he does quite right in refusing to gratify the curiosity of the inquirer,—I confess that this is always my way, and I cannot blame another if he adopt it."

"Ye're a spunky chield noo," answered Mr. Littlejohn, looking lazily over his spectacles, "but ye're no just in the situation to gie vent to your humour. Provost, ye had better send for their wallees; may be we'll find there what they dinna seem willing to gie us by the word o' mouth."

"Oo ay," answered the Provost, "gang yer way doon for the wallees, Gruppit, gang yer way doon for the wallees."

The examination had proceeded thus far, when there occurred a slight bustle in the outer shop, which was immediately succeeded by the entrance into the sanctum sanctorum of the same individual by whom the travellers had been met at the outskirts of the town. He was received with every mark of respect by the Provost and his clerk, both of whom rose to bid him welcome, and both of whom accepted the abrupt mark of recognition with which he greeted them, as inferiors are accustomed to accept the condescending attention of their superiors. He sat down, however, without scruple, and looking sternly towards Allan and his fellow prisoner, said a few words, expressive not of curiosity, but of an apparent conviction that two dangerous characters stood before him.

"Have we got spies or traitors here again, Provost?" said he. "Your vigilance deserves the utmost approbation of the Government, and shall not pass unnoticed."

"One or the other, Drumtochtie," replied the Writer, "that ye may depend on; for they are auld acquaintances of Lucky Mac Raby, and ye ken as well as I do, that little good comes of the acquaintances o' sic as her."

"*You have examined* them, of course, or are in the t

of doing so?" observed the stranger: "has their baggage been searched?—or rather, perhaps I ought to have inquired whether any definite charge has been lodged against them! These are troublesome times in which we live; nor is it the least vexatious feature in the case, that we magistrates are compelled to do continual violence to our own feelings, by treating as suspicious characters many who are as respectable as ourselves. But I make no doubt that you have good ground to go upon at present—something more than the late proclamation, which certainly does not authorize an arrest, unless on information formally laid."

"We hae our information, Drumtochtie, of coorse," replied the town-clerk. "Alexander Mac Raby maks oath and saith—"

"Na, na, Maister Littlejohn," interrupted Sanders, "dina pit mair on my back than it can carry. I telt ye by word of mooth, but made nae oath on't, that there was some unchancy-like folk at our public, and then ye ken——"

"Haud your tongue, ye clavering goose," interrupted the Writer; "if ye didna just swear tilt, ye did as muckle, for ye declared that ye was ready to swear."

"Is there no complaint nor information upon oath?" asked the stranger.

"Troth, I kenna whether there be or no," replied the Provost, "but Maister Littlejohn said that a' was right, and I believed him."

"Upon my word, gentlemen," observed the stranger, in a sort of whisper, which was, however, quite audible where the prisoners stood, "you have somewhat overstepped the limits of your authority; I hope you may have sufficient grounds for what is done. Have you ascertained whence the prisoners come, whither they are going, and what their business may be in Stirling?"

It is not necessary to continue the details of this civic examination. Enough is done when we state that the interference of the stranger gave a totally novel turn to the whole affair; that the baggage of the travellers was examined, that nothing suspicious was found there, and that the Provost and town-clerk were alike compelled to acknowledge that no ground for committal, or even for demanding bail had been made out. The consequence was, that the prisoners were dismissed, greatly to the disappointment of the mob, and, as it appeared, not much to the satisfaction of Master Littlejohn, who continued to asseverate that "we never *kent* any thing gude about the frequenters o' auld Luckie Mac Raby's public ayont the port." But that which

than all the rest of the proceedings struck Allan with surprise, was the behaviour of the gentleman, to whose address they were so much indebted. Though he had spoken familiarly to Parson Neil only two short hours before, he now treated him as an absolute stranger, and withdrew from the Provost's room, as soon as the examination came to an end, without so much as exchanging with him a sign of recognition. Nevertheless, a new light had burst into Allan's mind. He therefore retired to the inn, full of astonishment, indeed, and in silence; though not wholly destitute of a clew, by means of which the mystery could be in some degree solved.

CHAPTER VIII.

The travellers were scarcely restored to their sanctuary in the little sanded parlour, when Callum, who by some chance or another had been permitted during recent occurrences to go at large, broke in abruptly upon their *tête-à-tête*, and put a slip of written paper into the hands of Parson Neil. He read it hastily, tore it into minute shreds, and applying the lighted candle to the mass, reduced it to ashes. He then summoned the landlord, and after exhausting a tolerable vocabulary of abuse, commanded him to send in his bill without delay, inasmuch as they should not continue an hour longer under the roof of one to whose kindness they were so little indebted. It was to no purpose that first Sanders, and then his spouse, entreated the gentlemen to overlook their fault, "whilk was entirely to be attributed to their zeal for the true Kirk, and the Protestant succession." The insulted guest declared, that no consideration whatever would induce him to retract his determination, and Callum was, in consequence, instructed to lead the horses to the street with as little delay as possible.

To pay for the viands consumed considerably more than they were worth, to replace the baggage in marching order, and to restore to Allan the weapons which prudence had induced *his companion* temporarily to remove, occupied the

space of a few moments only. The travellers then mounted, and drew off slowly from the door of a habitation where their reception had certainly not been of the most friendly character. But the tardiness of their pace was not of long continuance. Having cleared the suburbs, and attained to a point where two roads met, Parson Neil, in a suppressed voice, indicated his wish that a fresh order of route should prevail. They accordingly took that path which diverged to the right, and plunging their spurs into their horses' flanks, set forward at the utmost rate of which the jaded animals were capable.

They had ridden thus, perhaps, a couple of miles, along a rough road, and under a darkened sky, when, attaining to an immense shaggy, as it seemed, with fir trees on the right, and overgrown with gorse or some other low bushes to the left, the distressed state of their overwrought steeds compelled them to slacken their pace. This was the more necessary, because at every step the road became more and more difficult of passage, a steep and broken bank occurring from time to time, which it behooved them to surmount; with here and there a ledge of smooth whinstone, worn away, in all probability, by the feet of passengers alone. But it was not till these obstacles had been surmounted, and a second road to the right brought them upon a more level track, that a syllable of conversation passed between them. The Parson, on the contrary, whose thoughts seemed wholly occupied, not only made no remark himself, but permitted many observations on the part of Allan to remain unanswered; indeed, his whole manner was that of one, who feels that dangers are around him, and that his chances of escape are, to say the least, uncertain.

It was near midnight, when Allan found himself approaching a solitary house, which, with its out-buildings, apparently lodges and stables, formed a sort of court-yard, or three sides of a square. Of the architecture of that mansion, as well as of the localities with which it was surrounded, the darkness necessarily hindered him from receiving any distinct impression; but the clank of his horse's hoofs, as he guided the animal towards it, made him aware that the court itself at least was paved. A light too, that streamed from a small window, just above the front door, afforded proof that the place was inhabited; and that its inmates were not all retired to rest, of which the prompt appearance of a man, in answer, as it seemed, to a low whistle from Parson Neil, at once assured him. Allan was not slow in imitating the example that was set. He alighted,

and, giving his bridle to the stranger, followed his tutor on foot.

Without pausing to knock, Parson Neil lifted the latch, and Allan saw before him a narrow flight of stone steps, illuminated by a single rushlight, stuck in the recess of what is called a "bore," or small casement. By these they ascended to a long passage or corridor, which ran, as it appeared to Allan, along the whole breadth of the house; and served, as a variety of doorways distinctly pointed out, to connect its several apartments together. Here again Parson Neil gave proof that he was not ignorant of the *locale*. He turned to his left, and leading forward, conducted Allan into a small but comfortable parlour, where, with his back to the grate, in which, notwithstanding the season of the year, a fire of peat was burning, stood the same individual who, under such strange circumstances, had twice already crossed their path.

"I am glad to see you here, Mr. Macpherson," said he, advancing and extending his hand, "particularly glad that you have been thus prompt in your movements. Had you delayed one half hour, no power on earth could have saved you. But how, in the name of fortune, came you to fix your quarters in the very place of all others which you ought to have avoided? I thought you had been aware of the change of government there, and that the trap had been actually baited for you, and such as you."

"I never heard of the circumstance till I learned it from the people themselves: how, indeed, should I? But is it prudent in you to commit yourself here, even for a single night, with a man circumstanced as I am? What if they should follow us?"

"Why, then we must do as has been done before," replied the stranger. "The old hiding-hole has never, as far as I know, been discovered; and I believe it is large enough to contain two with a little squeezing. But I apprehend no pursuit in this direction to-night. As soon, therefore, as you have refreshed yourselves with such viands as we can furnish, it will be the wisest course to go to bed, for the sun must not rise upon you within four miles of Stirling."

As he said this, he opened a small closet, from which he was proceeding to bring forth certain articles of food, when Parson Neil restrained him. A draught of milk was all that he would accept for himself, or permit Allan, who scarcely relished the beverage, to receive; after which their host, for *so he appeared to be*, marshalled them to their chamber.

was a garret, unceiled, and of narrow dimensions, containing simply a couple of mattresses spread upon the floor. Upon one of these Allan threw himself down, and the other being occupied by the Parson, the lights were speedily extinguished, and a profound silence reigned throughout the dwelling.

A man accustomed, as Allan had been from his earliest years, to fatigue in its greatest excess, and constant exposure to the weather, is not easily put out of the ordinary routine of his existence either when in action or in repose. On the present occasion, however, the case proved to be otherwise. Allan slept soundly and long; indeed he awoke not till after the morning sun had beaten so fiercely through the skylight of his chamber, as to give to it the temperature, rather of a tropical than of a Scottish dormitory. For a few moments he stared about him in profound ignorance as to where he was. He sat up, indeed, and rubbed his eyes more than once, ere his thoughts attained to any degree of consistency; and even then all that recurred to him was a vague and confused recollection that certain strange scenes had passed under his observation during the previous day. A glance towards the mattress, however, on which the Parson had reposed, recalled the events of the previous night distinctly to his memory. He leaped from his bed, and seeing that the other was vacated, dressed in all haste, under the painful suspicion that his ill-timed drowsiness might have put his tutor to inconvenience, if not to personal hazard.

Little time was expended by Allan upon his toilet, after completing which he descended a flight of perpendicular wooden steps, which, without so much as the skreen of a door, far less the intervention of a landing-place, communicated between his sleeping apartment and the corridor beneath. It was not a task of any difficulty to discover the parlour, into which, on their arrival the night before, they had been ushered; for, in sober truth, that little apartment constituted the whole of what may be termed the public rooms in this unpretending mansion; nevertheless, Allan was somewhat startled by finding that it contained neither his host of the preceding evening, nor, which concerned him much more deeply, Parson Neil. The sole occupants were three elderly ladies, two of whom appeared busy with their needles, while the third was sedulously engaged in loading a table with bread, cream, cups, preserves, a teapot, and other customary appliances to a substantial breakfast. Allan insensibly drew back at this spectacle, as if

g whether his presence might not be regarded as
ision; but of all apprehensions on that head he was
ly relieved. She who acted the part of Martha en-
him to advance, in a tone of which the genuine
ss could not be mistaken, while all appeared to vie
ie another in their endeavours to convince him that
neither unexpected nor unwelcome.
sured by this friendly reception, Allan did not scruple
the little party to which he naturally enough expect-
every moment would bring an addition. He took
t, moreover, at the breakfast-table, though scarcely
ing his surprise that the attack upon that most social
as not suspended; yet the meal passed over without
val of any fresh guest, of whom indeed his hostesses
d not to expect the arrival. Allan wondered at all
d at last ventured to ask, what had become of his
as well as of the gentleman to whose hospitality they
debted. The ladies looked first at one another, and
him, with an expression of which he could scarcely
hend the import, and endeavoured—at least it struck
at the moment—to evade the question. But Allan
t thus to be baffled. He repeated his inquiry in a
greater firmness, though still absolutely free from
ss or suspicion: and he was again met by an answer,
the least of it, somewhat vague. "The gentlemen
o' very far awa—but these were unchancy times,
ny an honest man was obliged to keep his head in
However, Maister Mac Diarmid needna distress
about ony friends of his name, who were all safe
ued there, as he might ha' gathered by what befell
r before, baith at Stirling and elsewhere." Allan
o longer doubt that he was in the hands of friends,
iew more, both of his own affairs, and of the affairs
clan, than he did himself. He, therefore, abstained
ssing a point, concerning which they seemed anx-
keep up something like a mystery; and anticipating
alf-hour to half-hour, that the Parson would, in his
oper person, unravel it, he was content to restrain
iosity within the bounds of good breeding.
remains of the breakfast being removed, and the
addressing themselves to their ordinary avocations,
egan to think of finding amusement for himself; and
is view spoke of strolling abroad, and examining the
amid which chance had thrown him. He was again
d, when the elder of the three, whom lameness
l to confine to her chair, threw out serious objections

to the proceeding. "It wad be just as weel if he didna g far fra hame for ae day at ony rate. Nae doubt this was out o' the way place, and there might be little danger indulging his humour; but a single day's confinement w do him nae harm, and there were mony reasons why it w be prudent to put up wi' it."

"But, indeed, my dear madam, I am perfectly unaw of any possible reason why I should conceal myself even a single day. The occurrences of the last four and twe hours have, I confess, astonished me, but they have in wise taught me to feel like an outlaw."

"May be no,' my dear," replied the old lady, "but you folk hae a great deal to learn. I am an auld body, and h seen plenty of ups and doons, and hope to see still mair b fore I die. So ye maun just submit your judgment to mi on the present occasion, and if ye behave weel, ye sal h your full liberty the morn."

Finding it useless to contest the point, Allan gave hims up with a good grace to the guidance of his venera hostess. He contented himself, therefore, with looking o from the little windows, which, three in number, afford three distinct phases to the prospect; and he saw enou even from these positions, to assure him that, though in t low-countries, chance had brought him into a region scarc less wild, though totally different from that in which h whole life had been spent. A crag, or rocky hill, of great altitude, but striking by reason of its precipitous fa and the forest of aged fir that surmounted it, hemmed in h vision, at a hundred yards' distance, when gazing in o direction. On the opposite side his eye ranged over a ha neglected garden, to a series of sloping grass-fields, at t bottom of which ran an inconsiderable stream; which aga was surmounted by a barren upland, terminating in anoth fir-clad hill, similar to that in his front. The third windo again opened out to him little else than a continuance of t same kind of scenery, for it carried his eye down the cour of the stream, and along a bleak and uncultivated scen throughout the whole extent of which, only three or fo cottages could be seen, and these at remote intervals t one from the other. In a word, Allan beheld on all sides striking specimen of the moorlands of Stirlingshire; county which, though for the most part singularly ferti and now at least in a state of high cultivation, is not mo than other districts of the sister kingdom, an absolute pa *dise.*

"*You* see before you a landscape," observed the youn

of the three ladies, "upon which true-bred Scotchmen cannot gaze without experiencing a strange mixture of proud and debasing emotions. Far down in the bottom, where the stream makes a bend to the north, is the field of Bannockburn—the scene of Bruce's immortal triumph, and Scotland's temporary escape from bondage. That hill to the left is the same from which his camp-followers advanced, bearing their blankets on the tops of poles as banners, and striking dismay, by the sound of their bagpipes, into Edward's chivalry. But what matters all that now? The memory of these illustrious deeds remains only to cover with disgrace the fallen and degraded descendants of those who wrought them."

"Let us houp for better things, Janet," interposed the eldest of the three; "ye tak owre gloomy a view of affairs. Scotland may yet be herself again; and though I cannot pretend to the second sight, I think the day is no' very distant that will see her cast off the yoke."

"No, sister," replied the person now addressed, a woman apparently about fifty years of age, whose regular features and clear complexion denoted that she had been a beauty in her youth; "do not deceive yourself; Scotland may rise against her oppressor, and make another effort to be free, but she will make it in vain. The blood of a betrayed sovereign—of a sovereign sold to certain death, has weighed her down already, and will do so again. Consider what her history has been ever since the fatal paction of Newark. Her native princes exiled, her religion overthrown, her parliament dissolved, her national existence taken away—these have been the just recompense of that sacrilegious act;—and then, as often as a portion of her sons have striven to wipe out the stain, how have they fared? Look to the fate of Graham and his brave followers, of Dundee the devoted and the loyal, ay, and of those nearer home, whose heads were blackening but a few years ago over the Long-port of Edinburgh. No, sister, Scotland is fallen, and will never rise again!"

"Ye'll no' say sae, Janet my dear," interposed the more bustling of the three, with an accent of affectionate blandness, which seemed peculiar to her—"Ye'll no' say sae when *he* comes himself, with a gallant array of Frenchmen at his heels, to help our ain lads in the good work."

"Of Frenchmen, Baby!" exclaimed her sister, disdainfully; "trust to a broken reed, but never trust a Frenchman. France has never yet stood by Scotland in the hour of distress, *and never will.* What did Henry for Mary, or Lo[illegible]

the Fourteenth for James! and what will the present Louis do for a monarch, that can give him little in return, except thanks! Our forefathers ever found the French faithless, and so will we."

"Aweel, Janet," rejoined the eldest, "it may be as ye say, but it is no' for us to determine how the game is to be played, nor to guide it by our counsels. We can only pray that God will fight for the right; and if he do, all will yet be as we wish. I'm thinking, however, that it's no' just worth while to bumbaze this young man wi' our nonsense; so, if ye like, we'll change the subject, whilk is at all times owre exciting for you, poor thing!"

As she said this, the old lady adroitly turned the conversation into a new channel. She interrogated Allan as to the state of his mother's health, the condition of his native glen, and the circumstances of many of the neighbouring gentlemen, with all of whom she seemed to be familiarly acquainted. Of course, her knowledge of matters apparently so far beyond her natural sphere, excited Allan's curiosity not less than his surprise, and he, in his turn, began to put a few questions, of which it was the tendency to draw from her an explanation of a mystery to him incomprehensible. But these the old lady cautiously turned aside; and he succeeded in gathering nothing farther than that she had once, in her younger days, known many persons and many places, of which she could now speak only as men speak of their dreams.

In this manner the day passed, Allan striving to conceal a curiosity which became more and more intense every moment, while his hostesses did their best to gratify him in almost every point, save that concerning which he was most solicitous. They amused him with tales of other times, descriptive of the manners of that part of his country which he had not yet seen. They spoke to him of the probable consequences of his sojourn in the capital, and mentioned the names of several persons of consequence to whom they intended to introduce him: nay, they went so far, especially the eldest of the three, as to throw out an occasional hint that from the son of his father great things would fairly be expected; and hence, that more than an ordinary circumspection of behaviour was required at his hands.

All this served only to whet the edge of that passion under which Allan already laboured. He saw that they knew something of his personal history as well as of the fortunes of *his race*; and while his conscience told him that the former was but little calculated to command their respect, his natu-

ral good sense suggested that the opportunity of reformation was not yet passed away. It must be confessed, however, that the most prominent subject of speculation with him was who these women could be, and by what means they could have attained to all that knowledge which they manifestly possessed? But on these heads he was doomed not, for the present, to be gratified. On the contrary, dinner came, and was discussed—and tea and supper followed, without either restoring to him his personal liberty or bringing back his friends; and when he retired at night to his "shakedown" in the garret, it was with ideas still more confused than those which oppressed him on the night before.

CHAPTER IX.

SEVERAL days were spent by Allan in the state of ungratified wonderment which marked the progress of that of which we spoke in the last chapter. He continued all this while a close prisoner in the house, learning nothing of the movements of his tutor, and knowing nothing of the adventures which might await himself; yet it cannot be said that time hung heavily on his hands; on the contrary, he found in the characters of his hostesses a great deal to excite his interest, and in their conversation much that was calculated both to instruct and to amuse. There were, moreover, books within reach—not very numerous, perhaps, but exceedingly select; while the youngest of the three ladies occasionally dispelled his ennui, by singing to her own accompaniment on the spinet a wild air of his native hills. Now Allan, like his countrymen in general, was passionately fond of music, more especially of the strains that connect, in a Scotchman's imagination, his own times with generations long gone by; and as almost all to which he listened here were of this description, relating chiefly to the exploits of Dundee, or the sorrows of that gallant chief's female partisans, the tastes of the young mountaineer were *gratified to their fullest* extent.

Though they abstained from making him acquainted either with their names or individual histories, Allan gathered from their general conversation that the ladies with whom he associated were sisters, and that they were unmarried. He collected, too, that they were members of an honourable and loyal family, which had adhered to the fortunes of the Stuarts through evil report and through good, and which was still ready to hazard its all in the attempt to restore the exiled dynasty. Two of them, indeed, carried their personal recollections back to the period of the Revolution, of which, as well as of its immediate consequences, they talked in bitter terms; but the events which, more than any others, seemed to have left painful impressions on their minds, were the union of the Parliaments and the fatal insurrection of 1715. Of the first they spoke as of a transaction ruinous, as well as disgraceful, to Scotland; of the last, as something by which their personal feelings had been lacerated, beyond the power of time itself to heal. To say the truth, however, it was from her whom the sisters addressed as Janet, that Allan heard most of the unhappy affair of 1715. It was a topic to which she continually reverted, and, as it struck Allan, with a degree of bitterness, such as is, for the most part, occasioned only by the overthrow of some favourite hope; while the others failed not, as often as an opportunity occurred, to withdraw her from the contemplation of objects manifestly too painful for endurance. Thus, though little accustomed to the study of human character, Allan found in his hostesses a great deal to rivet his attention; so much so, indeed, that he became at once unconscious of the progress that time was making, and forgetful, to a certain extent, of the past.

In this manner much more than a week had elapsed, throughout which Allan was permitted no farther liberty than an occasional stroll in the direction of the stream; when, returning one day rather sooner than he had intended, he beheld in the little parlour the same individual who had originally welcomed him to its friendly shelter. Allan was not a nervous youth, yet he could not so far command himself as to conceal the surprise with which the contemplation of such an object affected him. He started back involuntarily; and though he checked the emotion at once, the smile which played upon the stranger's features convinced him that the movement had not escaped observation. A proud man, however, and Allan was not wanting in that quality, *cannot* endure to be taken by surprise; he therefore threw *into his* manner a semblance of the most perfect indifference,

and returned the smile with which the stranger regarded him, with a keener and more scrutinizing stare than he had yet esteemed it necessary to employ.

When he first saw the individual in question, the impression produced on his mind was not such as to excite any pressing desire to inquire minutely into his condition or circumstances. Concluding that he belonged to the order of respectable burghers—a class with whom his companion was likely to have formed an intimacy in his youth, Allan took little heed either of his appearance or manner; nor, when his opportune arrival in the Provost's back-shop stood both the Parson and himself instead, did there occur much to create a different feeling. The part which he had played since was, however, calculated to render him an object of considerable interest; and Allan now examined him closely for the purpose of ascertaining, if he could, whether any, and what species of mystery surrounded him. But he discovered nothing, either in the bearing or dress of the man, to warrant such a notion.

In stature he was above, rather than below, the middle size; robust, and strongly built. His age might be sixty, or perhaps more, though he carried his years well, and seemed capable of undergoing any degree of fatigue; but his bearing was not marked by any peculiarities. There was a frankness about him, and a total absence of servility, which produced a conviction that he must at least be independent in his circumstances; and which might, for aught he knew to the contrary, be occasioned by a consciousness of superior rank. Nevertheless, Allan could not but acknowledge that his close and somewhat lengthened scrutiny left him pretty much where he was before, except that he received an impression that it was his part to behave towards the stranger at least with modesty, perhaps with forbearance.

The ordinary salutations having passed, the stranger, without pausing to be interrogated, abruptly informed Allan that he was the bearer of a message from Mr. Macpherson, who, for reasons of a peculiar kind, found himself incapacitated from personally conducting his pupil to the metropolis. "He has commissioned me," continued he, "to send you forward, duly supplied with such letters as may at once introduce you to the society befitting your birth, and place the opportunity of acquiring knowledge within your reach; and very willingly would I have discharged the trust in person, had not I, likewise, been detained in the west by *business of a pressing* nature. You will, however, find, that

you are not unexpected in Edinburgh, and the credentials which I shall have the pleasure of putting into your hands, will, I trust, serve you in good stead. Perhaps you may discover, when you reach the capital, that more is looked for from a Mac Diarmid than that he should study logic and the classics in times like these; and I will not so far distrust the blood as to imagine that any of the race will be slow in doing his duty. I give no opinion as to the fitting moment when your journey ought to commence. I only beg to say, that whenever you feel disposed to set out, a guide is ready to conduct you and your servant to the place of your destination."

Allan thanked the speaker for his good intentions, and professed his readiness to set out on the instant; but he asked no questions respecting Parson Neil. A two-fold motive influenced him here. In the first place, he thought that he could observe in the manner of his new friend a disinclination to enter more into particulars than he had already done; in the next, he was not himself particularly anxious to be favoured with a renewal of the Parson's society. After a few words of general conversation, therefore, it was determined that he should abide where he was for that night, so as to commence his journey with the first dawn on the morrow.

There occurred nothing during the remainder of the day calculated in any extraordinary degree to keep the attention of Allan on the rack. The stranger was indeed an object of considerable interest, as well on account of the deference with which he was treated by the ladies of the house, as from the reserve of his own habits; but of him he saw little, for, except at meal-times, he was constantly shut up in his own apartment. His conversation, too, when he joined the family, though perfectly gentlemanlike, was marked by a degree of stateliness which checked all approaches to familiarity. He studiously avoided all allusions to himself, to the state of the times, and to his own proceedings. On the other hand, Allan failed not to remark, that, with the respect which they paid to him, was mixed up a great deal of warm and affectionate feeling. This was particularly apparent in the case of the youngest sister, towards whom he seemed to be drawn by a species of sympathy not easy to be defined; for it required but little penetration to discover that there could not possibly exist between them either the tie of relationship, or the bond of a marriage contract.

The day passed over heavily enough, as far as Allan was concerned; and the ladies, after bidding him farewell,

withdrew to their chambers. Allan was about to follow the example, when the stranger, who lingered behind the rest of the company, motioned him to remain. He did so, without however resuming his seat, and assuming an air of indifference, waited patiently till his companion should see fit to open the conference. But he was not destined to be kept long in suspense. As soon as the door was closed, and they were left alone together, the stranger took from his bosom a packet, and handing it to Allan, informed him, in few words, that it contained the introductions to which he had formerly alluded. "And now, Glenarroch," continued he, "I might put an end to this interview, were I not impelled by the interest which I take in all that concerns your family, to offer to you a few words of advice and warning. I will not conceal from you, that with the habits in which you have hitherto indulged I have been made acquainted. Nay, do not start, young man, nor frown, as if the smallest wrong had been done you. I had a right to inquire into the matter, and they who told the truth only did their duty. I repeat then, that with the discreditable habits in which you have too long indulged I am well acquainted; and the reserve with which you have been treated ever since you came here, may satisfy you, that such practices are not likely to advance you in the estimation of your father's friends. As you value the honour of the name you bear, look well to yourself in the place whither you are going. Many eyes will be upon you, when you know it not, and your fate, either for good or ill, will be determined probably before you are aware of it. So much for general advice—and now for a hint more immediately concerning individuals. Beware how you lend yourself to any project which shall have for its object the gratification of your own wishes at the expense of another's happiness. There, again, I warn you, that eyes will watch your proceedings, such as you may find it impossible to deceive; and should you be proved capable of an act so atrocious, you need not show your face again in the society of honourable men."

"And who are you," demanded Allan, fiercely, "that presume thus to lay down laws for me, who never had the honour of seeing you till the other day?"

"It matters not who or what I may be," replied the stranger, sternly; "it is enough for you to be aware that with the circumstances of your family I am intimately acquainted; and that, for their sakes, if not for your own, I desire to see you different from what you have been. I *speak to you as a friend*; but I tell you fairly, that whether

I am to continue to regard you as such, will depend entirely on the line of conduct which you consider it proper to pursue."

"If you really know the circumstances of my family as intimately as you profess," replied Allan, "you must be aware that it is not their custom to value either the friendship or the enmity of mortal man. So far you will find that I am not degenerate from my forefathers. I hold equally cheap both the protection and the defiance that you offer me."

"I did not enter upon this subject," replied the stranger, coolly, "for the purpose of bandying angry words with the son of Glenarroch. Your fate is in your own hands, and the consequences of your conduct, either for good or evil, will fall upon your own head. I wish you a good night. Your servant and guide will be ready to attend you as soon as you please in the morning."

The stranger was about to withdraw, when Allan threw himself between him and the door. "We part not thus, sir," said he. "Your years, and the peculiar circumstances under which we meet, hinder me from taking up the gauntlet which you have somewhat needlessly thrown down. But at least I will accept of no favours from your hand. Take back your introductory letters. I would rather live alone all my days, than owe my footing in the best society that Scotland can afford, to you."

"Allan Mac Diarmid," replied the stranger in a softened tone, "I will not take back these letters. They were written at the desire of your mother; and for her sake, if not for your own, I must insist on your making a proper use of them. I did not mean to hurt your feelings, far from it—but I do wish to awaken you to a sense of what is due to yourself; and therefore I speak plainly both of the past and of the future. Much more agreeable would it have been to me, had I been permitted to take the son of my old friend into my closest confidence—but that time may come yet.—Good night—and if my manner have appeared harsh, forget it, while you remember only the advice that I have felt it my duty to give."

Allan was much struck with the mixture of dignity and kindness with which this brief sentence was spoken. Involuntarily his anger gave way, and putting up the packet in his bosom, he answered only with a low bow. Nor was the conference protracted on the other side. When Allan raised his head, the stranger had already passed him, and mutually saluting one another, they separated; the o-

'sing the corridor towards a chamber at the farther
nity, the other mounting the trap-stair, or ladder,
ds his roost in the garret.
e gray dawn of the morning was yet struggling with
, when Allan, whose dreams had been of a confused
omewhat distressing nature, awoke. He rose feverish
neasy, and descending to the court-yard found, to his
all astonishment, that Callum, of whom he had neither
nor heard any thing since the memorable night of their
l, was waiting to receive his orders. The poor fellow
ssed himself delighted at the meeting, and eagerly
nded when his master would be ready to set out, for
orses, he said, were saddled and ready, and the guide
eeping beside them. Now, as Allan had received his
ssal over-night, there existed no reasonable obstacle to
e to the immediate gratification of Callum's wishes.
herefore, directed that functionary to call the guide
ead out the horses; and Callum obeying with singular
will, the little cavalcade mounted and set forward.
e first three or four miles of their journey led across a
y and barren tract, not exactly of moor, but of arid and
asture land, overrun with loose stones, and diversified
and there by extensive patches of gorse. This, however,
to an end as soon as they had crossed the stream, and
n to mount the heights which overhang it on the south,
ttaining the summit of which, there burst all at once
the vision of Allan a panorama that excited in no or-
y degree his admiration. The sun rising in cloudless
sty above the tops of a range of low hills, shed down a
of golden light upon the carse of Stirling. Through
centre of that vast plain, now waiving with corn, and
tifully diversified with wood, the Forth wound on his
ous way, gradually extending his waters till they be-
merged in the Firth, over which numerous white sails
plying. Far to the west rose that iron range, from
h he had himself so recently descended, blue even in
norning light, and gloriously rugged; while on the
the green Ochils presented a barrier to the eye, less
ntic, it is true, but scarcely less picturesque, certainly
ess beautiful. But it was not on account of its mag-
nt boundaries, nor yet because of the extraordinary
ness and fertility of the plain itself, that Allan stood to
upon that scene with unspeakable delight. He beheld
r sheer and abrupt, like islands from the bosom of the
our or five rocks or crags, singularly alike in their
rmation and shape, and all within the compass of three

leagues the one from the other. These broke in upon the extensive level, and towering upwards, almost at its centre, carried back the imagination to other times, when, in all probability, their barren tops were alone seen from amid a waste of waters. Nor let the effect be omitted of the early sunbeams striking full upon the housetops and battlements of romantic Stirling. In a word, Allan looked round upon a scene, than which it were difficult to discover one more attractive in nature; and in comparison with which, the chastest flight of the most chaste imagination would produce something in a remarkable degree insipid.

Having halted to gratify his feelings, at least as long as his guide appeared to relish, Allan again set forward. He met with no adventure, worthy of repetition, in his way. The little conversation that passed, moreover, between him and Callum, proved, as far as he was concerned, the reverse of satisfactory; for though he discovered that his valet had not, during the past week, been a denizen of the same spot of earth with himself, neither by threats nor persuasions could he prevail upon him to say where his time had been spent. All that the imperturbable attendant could be induced to communicate amounted to this, that "he had been to mair nor ae place, but whereabouts they lay, and what took him there in truth he couldna tell." Allan became, naturally enough, somewhat sulky under such treatment, and hence, when the goal towards which they were bound came in view, it was beheld without the utterance of a single observation by any of the party.

CHAPTER X.

The day was drawing to a close, when the travellers, after making a circuit round the base of the rock on which the castle of Edinburgh stands, and traversing the Cowgate, turned to the left, and ascending a steep wynd or alley, emerged into the High-street, not far from the ancient cathedral church of St. Giles. To Allan, who had never before *mingled* in "the busy haunts of men," the scene was

once imposing and extraordinary. Crowds of work-people let loose from their daily toils, thronged the *trottoirs;* carriages, carts, waggons, and sedan-chairs, passed to and fro over the causeway, while here and there a group of gallants might be seen, jostling their way, in a state of more than half intoxication, from one "change-house" to another. Then the height of the houses, the breadth and length of the street, the magnificent architecture of the old church,—these, with the curious aspect of the luckenbooths, and of countless objects besides, to which there is scarcely to be found, in other European cities, an exact parallel, could hardly fail of affecting a stranger from the western hills with sensations wholly new. With respect to Callum, indeed, he appeared utterly confounded. He gazed round him with a stare so vacant, that even the guide, though well accustomed to witness the utmost effects of surprise, could not refrain his laughter, which he indulged freely, in consequence of the inability of its object to comprehend in what source it could by possibility originate. Yet when the lowlander, in the petulance of superior knowledge, began to joke his companion on his presumed inferiority, he found the Celt by no means disposed to accord with his humour.

"Saw ye ever sic a sight as that?" quoth the guide. "Is na that a muckle town?"

"Oo ay," replied Callum, the toon's well enough—but I wus ye saw the toon of Glenarroch!"

But there was little opportunity afforded for the kind of recrimination which this commencement to the dialogue between these testy personages threatened to produce. In a few moments after gaining the High-street, the guide drew up on the right side of the way, and pointing to the mouth of a close, informed Allan, "that doon there Mr. Keelevine staid." Allan immediately dismounted, and leaving the horses in charge of Callum, followed his conductor to the "land," in the second story of which resided the gentleman under whose roof he was destined to be, for some time at least, a sojourner.

With the customs of the Scottish gentry a hundred years ago, as they exhibited themselves both in the privacy of domestic life and in public, the English reader is by this time too well acquainted to render any exposition of them necessary here. Let it suffice to state, that Allan found the Writer, a bachelor of some fifty years' standing, hospitable and kind after his own peculiar fashion; that his establishment *consisted of* a single female servant, a willing and *hard-working slave*, though certainly not troublesome by

reason of over-cleanliness or excess of polish; and that, being expected, he was not the cause of any extraordinary bustle—the never-failing consequence of an abrupt invasion of a bachelor's family. Mr. Keelevine, on the contrary, "wondered what could ha keepit him sae lang on the road," —"was mickle disappointed that his auld friend and chum didna think it safe to accompany him,"—"and wad hae the greatest pleasure in the world in doing a' that lay in his power to mak him comfortable. In a word, Allan felt himself at ease on the instant, and dismissing his guide, to whose custody the horses were intrusted, in order that they might be sent back to Glenarroch, took possession, with Callum as a valet, of a suite of apartments which the Writer had hired for him.

We pass over the occurrences of the succeeding ten days, because they differed in nothing from those which generally attend the first appearance of a young man on the stage of public life. Allan delivered his credentials, was hospitably received by those to whom they were addressed, and partook of such entertainments as it was then the fashion to give—dining for the most part at home—repairing at five o'clock to the ladies' tea-table—and adjourning from thence to some tavern or "change-house," where supper, then the social meal among gentlemen, had been ordered. In meetings of the latter description, indeed, Allan took an especial interest. They suited his habits exactly, for the men drank deep; and of his taste for hard-drinking we have already had occasion to speak. Yet, though treated with marked kindness at first, Allan saw, or imagined that he saw, even here, symptoms of growing coldness among his new friends. Nor perhaps did he misinterpret the temper of the times. Indulging freely in an occasional *screed*, the Scottish gentlemen of the eighteenth century were not confirmed sots; and as Allan's infirmity grew upon him from day to day, he ceased by degrees to hold his natural place in society.

Soured and disgusted by what he chose to regard as an unmerited slight, Allan gradually withdrew from the company of his equals—and as man "cannot live alone," chose a set of companions from among the lowest and most unprincipled frequenters of the taverns. His orgies were no longer conducted according to the established usage of gentlemanly sittings. Brandy, and usqueba, in enormous quantities, became substitutes for claret and Canary, while brawls and personal rencontres seldom failed to give variety to the sport. Before the expiration of three short weeks, indeed, Allan had not only disappointed all the hopes of those who

took an interest in his welfare, but had sunk in the scale of debauchery and vice below their most dreaded anticipations.

We are not going to offer the slightest apology for behaviour so discreditable. It is beyond dispute, that the principles of honour and right feeling were fast decaying from the young man's mind. The last link between uprightness and utter degradation, the sense of shame itself, scarcely held together; indeed, even Mr. Keelevine, the most submissive and obsequious of Writers, began to throw out broad and intelligible hints, that he had not bargained for such a protegé as Parson Neil had sent him. Yet, let justice be done even to Allan. He saw, or imagined that he saw, that into whatever company he obtruded himself, all eyes, but especially those of the women, beheld him with disgust. It is true that such efforts as he made to render himself agreeable to the fair sex, were both awkwardly performed and wretchedly directed; nevertheless, the apparent coldness, even of those most indifferent to him, rankled like a poisoned arrow at his heart. The truth is, that like most men to whom some particular defect attaches, he was especially sensitive on the score of that defect. He had taught himself to suspect that by the sheer deformity of his countenance an impassable line was drawn between him and the purer and better feelings of his nature; nor was there a circumstance, however trivial in itself, however distinct from the bent of his overheated imagination, that he did not twist and bend into a confirmation of that, his most abhorred suspicion.

So far a general sense of wrong, if we may venture to use the phrase, had influence in giving a turn to his tastes and character. There were, however, other thoughts, still more poignant, as well as more continually at work, that drove him to seek for refuge from present misery in almost any resource. Allan still doted upon his cousin. By night and by day her image was uppermost in his mind, except when the whirl of dissipation momentarily drowned it; and as there accompanied it only the bitter reflection that she had renounced him for ever, it is scarcely to be wondered at if he should seek to steep his memory in the most poisonous dregs of forgetfulness. We have spoken of Allan as a proud man. He was so, in the worst sense of that term—for pride and selfishness were with him convertible terms. In every respect save one,—in point of birth, connexion, personal merit, and *manners*, he considered himself entitled to the *love of any girl* whom he might choose to address. He

believed also, that there was a time when his influence, where alone he cared to exercise it, was paramount; and he imagined that the case might have been so still, but for an accident. But when he beheld the reflection of his scathed visage in the glass—when he looked upon that countenance, blasted and disfigured by disease—proud as he was, the acknowledgment burst from his very heart, that Marcelly could not be blamed if she loathed him. In few words, a deep and and overwhelming conviction that God had dealt unfairly by him—a persuasion that he was marked by an especial providence as an outcast from his kind, haunted him like an evil spirit continually, and drove him, in absolute desperation—in the very spirit of defiance to his Maker and his laws—to commit crimes, from the bare idea of which he would have otherwise shrunk.

Desperate as he was, and reckless of the opinion of the world, there was yet one principle about Allan which neither time, nor an enlarged intercourse with profligate society, succeeded in rooting out. For his mother he continued to entertain the most profound reverence. Whatever might have been the case with others, she at least had never turned her back upon him. No—when the hand of God fell first and most heavily upon him—when all besides shrank from him as something polluted and impure, he remembered that his mother's eye still beamed on him with kindness—that her tongue uttered accents of affection and support alone. For her, therefore, his devotion continued to be, what it had ever been, boundless. There was no sacrifice that he would not have cheerfully made, had she but required it—there was no act which he would have failed to perform, had its performance promised to increase her happiness. So far, indeed, was the feeling carried, that even in his wildest humours, a hint that his mother would receive pain from some meditated outrage would suffice to restrain him. Unfortunately, however, the single being who possessed any real influence over him, knew not how to exercise it for his good. In her eyes he was all that a mother could desire her son to be; and hence she not only failed to restrain him in his career of evil, but totally discrediting that such a career was begun, encouraged him to follow it up, by ministering to the accomplishment of his most extravagant wishes.

Among other matters, from a due acquaintance with which Allan's education had almost unavoidably kept him back, was a knowledge of the value of money. Requiring but little to supply his wants in Glenarroch, yet accustomed

To have these wants fully gratified, Allan continued to deny himself nothing when in the metropolis; and as a necessary consequence, dissipated his slender supplies in an inconceivably short space of time, besides running up scores in more than one quarter. No great while elapsed, ere he began to feel the effects of this. Tavern-keepers a hundred years ago were like tavern-keepers of the present, day, but little disposed to give unconscionable credit; and hence Allan, whose debts chanced to accumulate chiefly at the quarters whither the desire of "drowning care" drove him, soon began to find himself but an unwelcome guest even there. It is said that when a horse becomes fairly bogged, he never thinks of drawing back, but flounders on till he is totally lost. In like manner, Allan followed the usual proceeding of young men situated as he then was; and believing his affairs to be desperate, took exactly the steps that were calculated to render them so.

In all countries, and at all periods of their history, the common resource of men who love dissipation and lack the means of purchasing it, is play. In Edinburgh as well as elsewhere, and an hundred years ago equally as now, the opportunity of indulging that propensity lay within the reach of such as might seek it—nor was Allan long left to exercise his ingenuity in considering how it behooved him to proceed. He had early become a member of more than one of those clubs or associations, the avowed purpose of whose existence was to kill time and seek amusement. Into the Horn Order he was introduced by one of its leading members; and he entered for a time, with heart and soul, into its follies and vices. He now enrolled himself in the Hell-fire Club; and soon became, in point of recklessness, and an utter disregard of all ties human and divine, a prominent performer in that outrageous company. But Allan, though a rash and eager gambler, was no match in point of skill for those with whom he associated. Like other pigeons, he won small sums at first, only that he might lose them again with interest; till in the end the means to which he had trusted for the purpose of repairing his broken fortunes, put the last seal to his ruin.

CHAPTER XI.

Among the many "strange companions" with whom his habits brought Allan into contact, there was one in particular to whose generosity he had on various and pressing occasions been indebted. Who or what that individual might be, no one appeared to know; except that he played skilfully, was by his dialect an Englishman, spent his money freely, and put up, sometimes at one place of public resort, sometimes at another. In person he was handsome, that is to say, tall and well-proportioned. His features were regular, and his hair dark and clustering; in short, his appearance was altogether such as would scarcely fail of inducing even a careless observer to look at him attentively. It is highly probable, however, that the effect of a close and critical examination would not have been favourable to him. A sallow complexion, with a peculiar cast of the eye—a disinclination, as it seemed, to look you directly in the face, gave somewhat of a sinister expression to his countenance, which was not removed by a certain habit which he appeared to have, of watching with an eagle's glance the movements of those around him, as often as their attention chanced to be turned to other objects. Yet was there nothing absolutely repulsive, either in the bearing or manner of this man. He was, on the contrary, polite almost to servility—slow of speech, and peculiarly guarded in the expressions which he employed; qualities which kept him clear from giving as well as taking offence, under circumstances in which quarrels were somewhat hard to be avoided.

Hatfield, for such was the name by which the Englishman was known, had frequented the gaming houses of Edinburgh long before Allan made his appearance there. From time to time, indeed, his companions missed him, for he absented himself occasionally for three months at a stretch; but he

never failed to return in the long run with the same abruptness that had marked his departure. It was understood, moreover, that though on speaking terms with all the most dashing black-legs about town, he honoured none of them with his confidence; nor, as far as any one knew, had he ever admitted them to the rites of hospitality. Equally remarkable was it, that though no one could accuse him of playing unfairly, he was almost always successful; and that too in the face of chicanery, which on more than one occasion he had exposed. The consequence was, that while they eyed him askance, the professional frequenters of Allan's Close, Halkerston's Wynd, and such other resorts of the profligate, could not presume to insinuate any charge against him, on the strength of which he might be ejected from their society.

Either design or accident so ordered it, that of the particular parties among which this individual was included Allan frequently formed one. They played against each other too on all occasions; and Allan invariably came off the loser. For a time he paid his debts, and while the scanty remittances which he received from home enabled him so to do, paid them in money; when these failed, notes of hand were substituted, which Hatfield accepted readily, and for the redemption of which he appeared nowise urgent. Encouraged by this seeming forbearance, Allan pursued his fatal course, till there hung over him a load, of the amount of which he was scarcely aware—nay more, he stooped so low as to accept at the hands of this stranger several direct loans, in order that he might satisfy the demands of some other and more pressing creditors. It is true that these advances were made, not only without reluctance, but with a cheerfulness of manner well calculated to lessen the loan of obligation; nevertheless, fallen as he was, Allan could not look back upon such transactions without the deepest self-condemnation. By degrees, indeed, thought became torture to him, and solitude hell. A mesh was woven round him, of which he felt the pressure, but from which he saw no possibility of escape; and hence the single object of his exertions was to stifle reflection, by plunging still deeper into the abyss.

In proportion as his affairs approached a state of utter ruin, the few principles of honour which had survived his reckless career in the Highlands, faded one by one from Allan's mind. Hitherto his play had been marked by no unfair dealing. He watched his game attentively, and staked his money where he imagined the chances to be in his favour—

he now began to admit the idea, that much more than this might be hazarded. Long and anxious hours in each morning were in consequence devoted to a study of this new branch in what may be termed his profession. He threw the cards into every imaginable combination; he practised slight of hand till he became an adept in the arts both of substitution and abstraction; and, above all, he put violence on his humours, and acquired the power of abstinence at will, both from bursts of passion and the use of exciting potations. In a word, by dint of intense study, he made himself master of those secrets which are not often laid bare to the solitary inquirer, and having screwed his courage to the sticking-place, he proceeded to carry into practice the lessons which he had learned in the privacy of his own apartment.

The first steps which men take in vice, more especially in those particular vices which the world is prompt to condemn, are taken with fear and trembling. Allan exercised his skill for a time under the influence of an agonizing excitement. He did not venture to look round, lest his eyes should meet the suspicious glances of the company, and he took care to select as his instruments, those alone whose want of experience rendered them peculiarly open to his attacks. He succeeded beyond his expectations. Night after night fortune favoured him by throwing in his way some raw youth, over whom, heated by wine, it was no hard task to triumph; nor could he discover that the faintest suspicion of his integrity was entertained, either by the sufferer himself, or the lookers on. As a necessary consequence, Allan became, day by day, more satisfied with the course which he had adopted. Each successive trial gave him fresh courage to embark upon a new enterprise, till he learned at last to smile in the face of his victim, while deliberately consigning him to destruction.

Though they sometimes expressed their surprise at the turn which his luck had taken, Allan's gambling friends dropped no hints injurious to his character as a man of honour. They saw, indeed, that he came sober to the table, and they passed their jokes on the probable motives which induced him to do so; but neither by innuendo, nor even by gesture, did they raise a suspicion in his mind that they understood the nature of his play. All this was highly satisfactory to Allan, who began to anticipate the possibility of a release from the bonds in which his pecuniary obligations held him towards Hatfield. But as yet he studiously [illegible] coming into direct collision with that individual.

There might, perhaps, be a lingering of good feeling here: it was not quite satisfactory to engage with unequal weapons a man from whom he had received so many favours; and as to meeting him on other terms, that a long experience proved to be useless. Nevertheless, a regard to truth compels us to acknowledge, that good feeling alone did not sway him. Once or twice, just as some juggle had taken effect, Allan's eye chanced to encounter that of Hatfield, and he imagined that there was in the latter an expression of strange import, which he would not venture to analyze too closely. The fact however is, that Hatfield's sidelong glances resembled those of no other man besides. There was always a twinkle in his eye—a peering, prying, cynical leer, as if he sought to read, not the workings of his neighbour's countenance, but the very thoughts of his heart; nor was it possible to meet that glance, without becoming aware that such was its object—we had almost said, without being conscious that the object was attained.

Time passed, and his nightly labours sufficed not only to supply Allan with means of subsistence during the day, but gave him hopes of retrieving his fallen fortunes. There remained, indeed, but one creditor from whom he was not entitled to demand a release—that creditor was Hatfield, who, though still forbearing to the greatest degree, had dropped a few hints of late, that restitution of sums lent would be agreeable, and Allan determined that even at the hazard of detection, he would seize the first favourable opportunity that might offer to satisfy him. Again fortune stood his friend. A stranger, an accidental lodger at Middemas's, chanced to commit himself to the tender mercies of the club. From that individual, who staked his money rashly, and appeared wholly ignorant of the chances, Allan succeeded in winning several large sums, which he carefully set aside, with the view of putting all, at some convenient season, on a single hazard.

It was on a bracing December night, the ten o'clock drum having just begun to beat, and the closes, lanes, and alleys of Auld Reekie still affording a few minutes of safe passage to the lounger, when Allan, who had sat later than usual at a debauch, entered the Pandemonium in Carrubber's Close, where he had already spent so much of his time. It was an under-ground flat, to which the victim descended by a flight of stone steps, so narrow that two persons could not by possibility pass one another, and so steep, that, the slightest blunder of footing must have precipitated him to the bottom. *To the uninitiated* it presented the appearance of

ordinary oyster-cellar; that is to say, a mean apartment, fitted up with one or two coarse tables, on which stood large dishes of pandores, received the stray wanderer to a rude hospitality—but the secrets of the place lay beyond. Allan, indeed, scarcely paused to look around him as he traversed this exterior banqueting hall; but passing through a doorway in rear of the counter, entered at once upon a totally different scene.

On each side of a long passage ran a suite of two rooms, furnished solely with the view of accommodating the lovers of sport. One, containing a billiard-table, was lighted, according to immemorial usage, by means of sconces fastened round the walls; in another, dice and dominoes, with their usual accompaniments, prevailed; the remaining two were set apart for the convenience of such gentlemen as might prefer the more scientific diversion of cards. They were, one and all, mean and filthy to the greatest extent. Chairs, broken in the backs, deal tables, stools and forms, composed the furniture of these apartments. The floors were bare, except that a coat of sand crimped beneath the feet; the walls and ceiling were black and dingy—a hue to which the incessant smouldering of tallow candles could hardly fail to bring them; while the atmosphere, made up of every conceivable mixture of horrid airs, struck to the vitals of him who encountered it. Yet Lucky Bawden's in Carrubber's Close constituted, a hundred years ago, the most fashionable place of resort to the roués of the Scottish capital; vice appearing there, and claiming her votaries, not as now disguised under the garb of refinement, but in her native deformity and coarseness.

Neither dice nor billiards presented any attractions to Allan, who cast but a passing glance at the players, and walked forward to the card-rooms. He entered the nearest, but found that every table was occupied, by men whose flushed countenances and breathless silence told how engrossing was the interest attached to their respective pursuits. Somewhat chagrined, and not without apprehension that he had lingered too long over the supper table, he hurried on, and pushing open the second door, looked round. There was one table vacant here, and one only, beside which five or six gentlemen were collected, as if undetermined whether to take their seats or to abstain. Allan advanced, for the purpose of sharing in their deliberations, which he would have decided at once, by proposing a game at *brag*; but a second glance showed him that both Hatfield and the strange Englishman were among them. A sudden

qualm came over him as his eye rested on the figure of the former, and he stopped short.

"You are in excellent time," observed Hatfield, addressing himself to Allan; "we were just about to commence operations without you. Brag, too, your own brag is the order of the night; so come and take your seat among us." Allan did not feign, for he really felt a strong disinclination to accept the challenge. Never, since the commencement of his novel style of play, had he encountered Hatfield, under whose sardonic gaze indeed, he more than once felt his courage quail; and even now, though the single choice lay between doing so and standing idle, he hung back. Nevertheless, the raillery of his friends prevailed—he sat down next to Hatfield, and disguising the agitation which he found it impossible wholly to suppress, gave up his attention, as well as he could, to the progress of the game.

For some time fortune appeared to deal out her favours with great impartiality. Men won and lost again, according as chance directed; and Allan, like the rest, could count on few gains, till the spirits of the party rising with the progress of the game, bets were doubled and trebled without hesitation. Cautiously, yet with lynx-eyed care, Allan watched his opportunity. The reader need not be told that there is no game upon the cards which gives to the dealer greater facilities of cheating, undetected, than brag. Allan turned these to the very best account. Repeatedly the ace of diamonds turned up to his own hand, when the odds had been taken largely that no such occurrence would befall; and more than once it occurred that a pair of aces fell to his share, even when others distributed the cards. It was not to be wondered at if Allan's confidence should increase in exact proportion to his success. He played more and more boldly, called for brandy punch, of which he drank a considerable portion, and followed up his course of victory with great effect, till his gains amounted to something not far short of the sum which would have sufficed to clear up the accounts between himself and Hatfield. The goal was thus brought distinctly within view, and in order to ensure its attainment, Allan urged his Pegasus to its last degree of speed.

It so happened that throughout the evening's entertainment, Hatfield had uniformly backed Allan in all his wagers. Allan now challenged Hatfield with reference to a hand which he was himself about to deal, and the other accepted the challenge, to the amount of all his adversary's winnings. The deal proceeded. The players had secured each his two

cards—the third was in the act of distribution—indeed all, except Hatfield and Allan himself, had been supplied, when the former leaning towards the dealer, said in a low whisper, "Beware!" Allan shook in his chair. He cast a hurried glance towards the speaker, whose eagle-eye watched him with an acuteness not to be deceived; and after a vain effort to recover his self-command, went on with the game. Hatfield's card was high—it was the ace of clubs—decidedly the best that had been thrown; and, as was usual on the occurrence of such a piece of good luck, a murmur, expressive of different passions, burst from the lookers on. Again Hatfield took advantage of the momentary confusion. "It won't do with me, throw away your hoarded diamond, or I will expose you!" This was uttered in a suppressed tone, yet it penetrated the brain of the listener like an arrow. He did drop his hoarded diamond, and turning up a five of hearts, saw his gains pass on the instant, into the possession of his former creditor. Allan's senses became confused. He gasped for breadth, and leaning back in his chair, remained, for the space of three seconds, totally unconscious of all that was passing around him.

Perhaps there is not, throughout the compass of what is called civilized society, a spectacle more humiliating than that of a company of persons engaged in deep play. Not only is each regardless of the feelings of his neighbour, but, as it would seem, blind to their very existence; for gestures the most extravagant, and exclamations harrowing to common ears, pass in such cases absolutely unheeded. Overwhelming as Allan's dismay and confusion were, they escaped all eyes in that excited assembly, save those alone beneath whose petrifying glance he found it impossible to hold up. Yet it was to no purpose that he roused himself to appear calm. His forehead burned as he gazed elsewhere round the table, and it became deadly cold again, when he observed the hellish leer with which Hatfield watched his very looks. His skill totally forsook him. He played on, therefore, but it was absolutely at random, without ingenuity, almost without an aim. He accepted every bet that was offered, and we need scarcely add, that nine out of ten proved unfavourable. Allan's brain reeled, his throat was parched and dry,—he called for brandy, and drank it off in despair. But the measure to which he had recourse as an immediate relief from misery, served only to increase the fever that boiled in his blood. He could not succeed in *steeping* his senses in forgetfulness, so as to become callous even to the events that passed around; and hence, though

rendered fierce and dangerous to any who might inadvertently thwart him, he was still responsible for his actions, and liable to be treated as one that was so.

Notice has been taken of the success which for some time back had attended Allan's play, more especially when he was opposed, as chanced to be frequently the case, to the strange gentleman, of whose very name he was ignorant. To-night, the reverses of that individual were amply and rapidly made good. Instead of receiving the challenge, he gave it with a tact obvious to all, save the party most deeply interested; and at the close of each hand, Allan became more and more deeply his debtor. At last a settlement of accounts was demanded; Allan held up his empty purse, and uttering a few common places, customary on such occasions, proposed to give, what he himself professed to consider as equivalent to money, a promissory note. But the stranger declined that species of security. He had no wish to insinuate any thing disrespectful of the gentleman; he did not doubt that the gentleman's bond was negotiable anywhere, but he always settled his own debts of honour in hard cash, and he made a rule of treating others as he desired to be treated by them. Allan's eyes flashed fire. He struck the table violently with his clenched fist, and starting from his seat, demanded to be informed whether his credit were questioned.

"Undoubtedly not," replied the stranger, coolly. "No man can possibly call in question the credit of one, beside whose chair their lies even now security to a much larger amount than the trifling sum due to me."

"It is your ace of diamonds," whispered Hatfield; "the fellow has somehow seen it. Collect yourself, or you are undone for ever!"

With the speed of thought, Allan planted his foot upon the fallen card, and resumed his seat, in a frame of mind that beggars all description. Baffled, detected, on the very brink of exposure, stripped of all his gains, and plunged more deeply than before into difficulties, it is no wonder if he should have regarded his situation as one that admitted of no remedy. It was to no purpose that he made several efforts even to speak. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth—he could only fix a vacant and glassy stare upon the stranger's face, and remained silent.

"I think, sir," interposed Hatfield, addressing himself to the importunate winner, "that you scarcely deal with this *gentleman as his* case deserves. You see that his ready *money is gone*, yet you object to receive the only equivalent

for ready money which it is in his power to offer. I can only say, that were I in your situation, I would take his note-of-hand freely."

"Then you will not, mayhap, object to add your signature to his?" rejoined the party appealed to.

"We are not in the habit here of requiring security for debts of honour," replied Hatfield, coldly, "nor would it become me to innovate on the customs of the place. But rather than see a man of honour put to inconvenience, I would myself become his banker, did he request it."

"Will you indeed?" asked Allan in a low and husky tone. "After what you have seen to-night, will you again befriend me?"

"I will," rejoined Hatfield in a whisper, "notwithstanding all that is passed; sign this blank bond, which we can fill up at our leisure—we are pretty much at home by this time in the form—and the means of stopping that scoundrel's mouth are yours."

"How shall I ever be able to repay your kindness?" exclaimed Allan, eagerly grasping at the paper, and affixing to it his signature.

"Leave all that to me," rejoined Hatfield, as he put the deed in his pocket, "and pay him what you owe, I beseech you. The cur yelps after his money like an untrained beagle after a drag."

Allan took with a trembling hand the purse that his companion conveyed to him, and told out the amount of his losses to the last guinea; but neither his strength of body nor vigour of mind carried him farther. He started from his seat, and hurrying through the room, rushed with the step of a maniac into the street.

CHAPTER XII.

THE bells of several churches struck two as Allan emerged from the head of Carrubber's Close and entered upon the High-street. It was a clear, calm, frosty night in December; the moon sailing bright and beautiful amid a host of attendant planets, shed over tower and town a flood of mellowed light. St. Giles, with its picturesque and elegant crown, glittered like a thing of silver; the tall houses, some in bold relief, others in deep shade, assumed the character rather of a painting than a reality; nay, even the Luckenbooths stood forward, with their rougher points softened down, as objects of admiration. Yet was Allan alike unconscious of the splendid beauty of the night, and of the magnificent architectural scenery by which he was surrounded. He looked up into the deep blue sky, but his thoughts were all earthly; he gazed upon the moon, but it was with the vacant stare of a man careless or ignorant of all external objects; and though his pace gradually slackened, the turmoil and tumult of his brain went on as fiercely as before. Allan felt that he was every way a ruined man; and he who feels this is necessarily indifferent to all other considerations, either of mind or matter.

Unconsciously, he had taken the direction that conducted towards his home, and was already advanced within a few yards of the head of the Wynd, when a hand laid gently upon his shoulder arrested his farther progress. Allan started, grasped at the hilt of his sword, and turned round, but instantly let it fall again when he saw that it was Hatfield.

"You quitted us too abruptly," said the latter. "Your losses were severe, I acknowledge; but fortune might have turned in your favour in spite of all, had you trusted her a little longer. Besides, you drew towards yourself the eyes

of the whole company, and the result has been the re
of favourable to your future chances."

"What matters it?" replied Allan, in a low and h
tone. "What have I to do with future chances? I p
my last card to-night, and played it fatally. I am ut
ruined, and you know that I am so!"

"It is too true," replied Hatfield, his voice softening
the accents of commiseration; "that unlucky attem
which from my soul I regret taking any notice, has,
afraid, destroyed you for ever. How came you to t
stale a trick upon me? and above all, why leave the p
of your intended juggle within the reach of a whole
pany?"

"What do you mean?" demanded Allan.

"Mean? why, that in your hurry you left the ac
diamonds where you dropped it, to enlighten the gul
round as to the means which have been used in flee
them."

"What do I hear?" exclaimed Allan; "I am discov
then, known to all men as a cheat and a swindler,—
not so?"

"I cannot deny it," replied Hatfield; "nor may I cor
from you, that the less you show yourself in public, at
for a time, the better."

Allan staggered against the wall of a house, and gro
heavily. He had imagined the cup of his misfortunes to be
ere this terrible announcement was made; he now ackn
ledged that it needed one drop more to produce an overf
But he was not left absolutely to his despair. Hatfield d
his arm through his, and in the kindest manner entre
him to bear up even under this last and most tremen
blow. "Your situation is not an enviable one, Mac I
mid; at least it is not one which those would envy by w
the smiles of the world are greatly valued. I know not
far this may be your case, but for myself, as it has not h
my fortune to experience much of the world's kindne
have long learned to look with perfect indifference upo
hate. You must do so also, and then the world and
will be on equal terms."

Allan answered only with another groan.

"But I speak, perhaps," continued Hatfield, "to
brought up in the lap of luxury, and accustomed from ch
hood to all the endearments of domestic life. To you, l
has doubtless been propitious. The bonds of friendship h
encircled you; ease, comfort, station, respectability,
yours; prospects of perfect happiness, of an old age

with the object of your boyish passion, amid the caresses of children's children—all these things have hitherto rendered life agreeable, and as a necessary consequence, given value to the world's good opinion. If it be so, then indeed I speak to little purpose; for——"

"If it be so!" cried Allan, and he laughed loud and bitterly. "Ay, if it be so, indeed. But it is not so. No, Hatfield; you see before you a wretch, accursed from his infancy, branded by his Maker as an outcast, shunned and hated by his kindred, the object of loathing and disgust to—to—to—God! what have I to do with the world? what are its smiles or its frowns to me? I tell you that I hate all mankind; and that if I regret this terrible exposure at all, it is because it robs me of the means of wreaking my vengeance upon the accursed race."

"Aha!" exclaimed Hatfield, exultingly; "does the land lie thus? Why then, cheer thee, my friend: we are brothers in wrong—we shall be brothers in revenge also—that is, if you are willing to put yourself into my hands and to be guided by my counsels."

Allan looked at the speaker, over whose features a strong ray of moonlight chanced to fall. There was a remarkable expression there—not so much of pity, though the tones of his voice were evidently modelled to that feeling, as of anxiety; and as it appeared to Allan, of subdued, yet palpable triumph. On any other occasion, the young man would have turned away from that glance in disgust; but now, a thorough sense of his own degredation, accompanied by a deadly rancour towards the whole animated creation, made him indifferent to all minor considerations. "And what would you with me?" demanded he. "I am too much indebted to you already; add but this act of kindness more, and I am your slave for ever!"

"No, no!" replied Hatfield; "not my slave, but my friend! You shall go foot for foot with me in the prosecution of many glorious undertakings. Society shall be our world of action—its members our prey; and we, like Lords of the forest, will hunt them as we need them. Does the one desire the attainment of any particular object?—the counsel, the purse, the arm of the other are ready to forward it. Does the other seek to wipe out the memory of some wrong?—his friend will return the obligation—ay, were it even in the blood of his own father. These are the terms on which we may live, on which we shall live, provided you have courage enough to cast yourself entirely free from certain scruples, *which are too apt to hold* even the bravest minds in thraldom."

"Hatfield," replied Allan, sternly, "I am a desperate man, and your proposals are such as you would not venture to make except to a desperate man. But I accept them without reserve. Lower than I am already, even in my own estimation, I cannot fall. The world has set a mark of exclusion against my name. Those whom I love with the purest devotion, hate me. I have many wrongs to avenge upon my species, and I am yours."

"You answer as I expected," rejoined Hatfield; "yet even now I would not hurry you into any rash engagement of which you might afterwards repent. Take time to consider what you are about to do, and weigh well the sacrifices which you must make. Are you of the number of weak mortals that believe in the excellence of what is called 'truth?' But I need not ask that question. No man plays as you have done these last two months, till he has learned to estimate as they deserve, the high sounding phrases, 'honour,' and 'probity.'"

"There is too much justice in what you say," replied Allan, while he shrank at the same time from the admission; "my deeds speak for me,—I have neither honour nor probity to renounce."

"It is well; for believe me, that never did the craft of knaves invent bugbears more perfectly contemptible, when examined closely. Then there is gratitude—another fool's bauble—how may it operate with you? Would the remembrance of kindnesses done long ago, restrain you from seeking an immediate gain or gratification, by sacrificing, if need be, your fancied benefactor?"

"I owe no human being the recompense even of thanks," replied Allan, "except it be yourself, and—my poor mother. Bid me not do wrong to her,—and with all besides, use me as you will."

"Your mother!" ejaculated Hatfield, with a slight intimation of contempt: "we make no war upon women, except for their own benefit. But, omitting your mother from our list, tell me, does the child's night-mare conscience exercise so strict a dominion over you, as that the mere tie of relationship should stand between you and your wishes?"

"My nearest relative is my deadliest foe," replied Allan, fiercely; "yet there are reasons why I should deal tenderly by him. I would not willingly injure the father of one—whom ——"

"Oh, I see what you mean," interrupted Hatfield, "and I acknowledge the justice of your reasoning. You are personally concerned in stifling a passion which under other

circumstances you would indulge. In plain language, it is more agreeable to your own feelings that you should abstain from cutting your relative's throat, than that you should cut it."

"You are a strange inquisitor," rejoined Allan, smiling bitterly, "but not the less acute on that account. I well know, that I owe little either to him or her; yet I could not wrong a hair of his head, did life itself depend upon my doing so."

"Well, well! so long as you are wise enough to resolve every thing into the grand leading principle of human action, it matters not, as far as our compact is concerned, how that principle shall operate in particular cases. Reverse this picture then, and imagine that the ruin of your enemy—ay, or even his death—would put you in possession of this particular prize which you so much covet. Have you courage enough to attempt the one, or effect the other?"

Allan paused for a moment, as if weighing the jewel against its price; and then said in a hurried accent, "There is no crime that I would not perpetrate in order to secure the prize to which you allude."

"All this is well; and now I have but one more question to put. You say that you are a desperate man, and I believe that you are so, as far at least as a total derangement of his pecuniary affairs can render any man desperate; for there are in my hands bills and bonds to an amount far beyond what I take to be your means of settlement. In character, too, you are utterly ruined. There is not a frequenter of Bowden's that would speak to you; you cannot presume to show your face there; and from the other haunts, of what is called society, you have long been excluded. I gather likewise, from your own lips, that your mistress is unkind, your friends faithless, and yourself an abject. I believe, therefore, that you say no more than the truth when you speak of your case as desperate."

"And why throw all this in my teeth?" demanded Allan, as his whole frame shook with contending passions. "Have I not acknowledged that I was desperate?—what gratification can arise to you from thus breaking the very bones of your victim on the rack?"

"Gratification! none whatever. I merely recapitulated certain facts as affording ground to believe, that you took no more gloomy view of your own condition than it deserved. I would not willingly inflict pain upon one whose case I commiserate from the bottom of my heart, and whom I desire to befriend to the utmost of my power. Answer me

then; desperate as your fortunes are—scorned by those whom you love, shunned even by your companions in vice, does there linger in your mind any womanish pity for the race to which you belong—any more than womanish reluctance to seek, from henceforth, your own ends, no matter by what means, so as they are attained?"

"I repeat, that I feel as a desperate man, and as a desperate man I am prepared to act."

"And then as to the phantom of which priests talk—that future state, which no man has ever seen—that retribution, of which, in this world at least, proofs so scanty are exhibited—are you capable of looking upon that with the eye of reason?"

"If looking at these things with the eye of reason you mean an absolute disbelief in the existence of a Providence, and a world beyond the present, as yet, Hatfield, I have not acquired your philosophy."

"I am not surprised at that," rejoined Hatfield, sneeringly. "This same Providence has dealt so bountifully towards you, that it were ill your part to dispute its supremacy;—and then your prospects in that particular world—which I have never seen, and from which, as far as I can learn, no specific message has yet been received—are so very brilliant, that it were strange indeed, could you be brought to barter them away for any sublunary gratification. The martyrs were fools, compared to such as you, for they sacrificed only life—you all the pleasures that can make life valuable."

"I am no fit subject for any man's raillery, exclaimed Allan, "and I warn you to beware how you exercise the talent upon me. My belief or disbelief is a matter for my own consideration alone. As far as you are concerned, it may suffice to know, that I can set God as well as man at defiance, and that I have done so already."

"Well, well," replied Hatfield, "we will not continue the subject farther to-night. You have opened out your feelings sufficiently to assure me, that our sentiments on most subjects accord; it may be, that we shall become still more intimately connected by and by. In the mean while I would not have you judge too harshly either of me, or of the species of contract into which I desire to lead you, for though to attain our objects we must be guided by a moral code of our own, that code is founded strictly on the dictates of nature. At all events I have been, and still wish to be, your friend. Go home, [illegible] let the reflection that you have one friend in the world [illegible]fort you in your

miseries. Avoid public places for a time—it may be troublesome to you to be recognised,—and when you stand in need of advice or assistance, demand both from me, and they shall be afforded. And now, good night!"

"One word more," exclaimed Allan, as he held the hand which the other extended towards him. "Though your language is strange, and your manner startling, I would not part from you without knowing when and where we are to meet again. How shall I proceed, cut off as I am from our accustomed haunts, in order to discover you?"

"When you desire to see me again—that is, so soon as you have made up your mind either to accept or to reject the alliance which I proffer, to come to the ruins of St. Anthony's chapel, two hours before midnight: whistle twice, and unless there occur something extraordinary to prevent it, your signal shall not remain long unanswered. Once more, good night!"

As he spoke, Hatfield extricated his hand from Allan's grasp, crossed over to the darkened side of the way, and darting down one of the lanes or closes that branch off towards the Lawn Market, was lost to the view in a moment. Allan stood still for a few minutes to recover his composure, and then hurrying forward, let himself quietly into his lodging.

CHAPTER XIII.

It is necessary that we should interrupt, for a brief space, the thread of our history, by carrying back the reader to the sequestered haunts of Glenarroch, and laying before him a general outline of the events which befell there, subsequently to the departure of Allan Breck for the low country.

It will be seen from the account which has already been given of the parting interview between Allan and his mother, that a new light broke in upon the mind of the latter, so soon as she had made herself mistress of the real state of her son's feelings. The irregularities in his conduct, which all her partiality had failed to conceal, were now sufficiently accounted for. His moodiness—the irritability of temper which he occasionally displayed—his distaste for home, and the society of the gentlemen of the clan—were no longer mysterious to her. The young man loved—his suit had been rejected,—and high-spirited as he was, who could wonder that he should seek to escape from the mortification of his own thoughts, were it in dissipation itself? No; if Allan were really what his e[illegible] presented him to be, and that he stood not wh[illegible]r from the charges was certain—the misfortunes could be attributed to one cause alone. Remove that cause, an[illegible]ease arising out of it would cease. Allan must be s[illegible] matter at what sacrifice on the part of all the wo[illegible] besides.

We stated some time ago, that on the morning of that day which witnessed the commencement of her son's journey, Mrs. Mac Diarmid had spent some time in private conference with Parson Neil. Of [illegible]t of that interview, it is scarcely necessary [illegible]y detailed notice should be taken. Aware of [illegible] rooted [illegible]ection which the Parson bore to her hus[illegible]emor[illegible] con-vinced that, if he desired one [illegible] more

than another, it was the welfare of the house which had so long sheltered him, she did not scruple to lay bare to him a good deal, at least, of the project which occupied her own mind. She told him exactly how Allan was situated —she implored him to assist with his advice and influence, in removing what she could not but consider as the groundless prejudices of her niece; and she pointed out, that not the peace of mind alone, but the respectability and eternal welfare of her son depended on the accomplishment of that object. She was not deceived in the estimate which she had formed of the degree of interest with which the Parson would listen to her tale. He heard her to an end with the most profound attention, and then entreating her to believe, that, if by the sacrifice of his own life he could promote the welfare of his benefactor's orphan, he would cheerfully lay his head on the block, he proceeded to discuss the particular question then under consideration.

"You speak of my influence and advice in removing your niece's prejudices. Alas! my dear madam, how little would either avail. Besides, though I am ready to make any personal sacrifice in your son's favour, is it possible for me, as a man of honour and a clergyman, to recommend the committal of Marcelly's happiness to the care of Allan—as he is now?"

"And why is he what you represent him to be? Have I not proved to you that his irregularities, or vices, if you will, all originate in one source? Make him what he once was —give him back that personal beauty of which the hand of God deprived him, and let Marcelly look upon him with the same eyes which she turned towards him ere that calamity befell, and if I know aught of my boy's disposition at all, he will be every way worthy to become the guardian of her happiness, or of that of any other woman that breathes."

"It may be so," replied Parson Neil, "though you must pardon me, if I add, that many symptoms of a wayward temper showed themselves previous to the occurrence of the misfortune to which you allude. But, however that may be, is it not right that he should first of all give proof of an inclination to curb his humours, before she shall be solicited to link her fate with his? And even then, who can hope to control a woman's will in such a case as this?"

"Is it by you that I am to be answered thus?" demanded the lady, in a tone which partook as much of wounded confidence as of offended pride. "I did flatter myself that Neil Macpherson would have accounted a woman's will, particu-

larly on such a subject, as nothing, when brought into competition with the eternal welfare of his friend's orphan."

"I have told you before, madam, and I repeat the statement, that gladly would I perform any thing of which a man of honour is capable, were my doing so to promote your happiness, or that of your son. But have I the power to aid you here? What influence have I over the maiden?"

"Much more, perhaps, than any other person that lives. You have trained her to habits of gentleness and self-denial; you have taught her that her own comforts ought to be freely sacrificed, in order to promote the welfare of others. She has, on all previous occasions, believed your assertions, and acted on the principles which you have inculcated. Tell her that an opportunity offers now of practising that great lesson, which it behooves her, for her soul's health, not to neglect. Assure her that the eternal, as well as the temporal welfare of Allan—nay, that my temporal and eternal welfare—the eternal welfare of one who shielded her infancy, and was to her more than a mother, hang in the balance. Adjure her, as she values her own peace of mind, not to reject the boy's suit. Is he not every way worthy of her—is he not already bone of her bone, and blood of her blood?"

"Indeed, my dear madam, you impose upon me a task, to which I am not competent; and from which, if I be any judge of human character, no good result could accrue. Marcelly is a gentle, but she is a high-spirited and right-thinking girl. She has heard more of your son's vices than you have done; nor is she one to be persuaded that her duty demands from her such a sacrifice as you would have me urge her to make. No, no, madam, I cannot undertake to address her as you wish; and I am sure that were I to do so, my entreaties would not avail."

"Neil Macpherson," said the lady solemnly, "am I to believe that you do really desire the welfare of my house above all other earthly things?"

"I could not till this moment harbour a suspicion that you should have doubted it."

"You say that you are ready to lay down your life in our service. That we do not require—but would you sacrifice something less than life—would you put violence on your own feelings for a time, in order to benefit us for ever?"

"There is no sacrifice of personal feeling that I am not ready to make in your service."

"*Is it* quite certain that Marcelly can never be persuaded *to this union*?"

"So convinced am I of that fact, that I should account it the sheerest piece of folly to enter upon the task of persuasion."

"Yet the match would be advantageous to her in a worldly point of view. Allan is an only child—there are neither sisters nor younger brothers to be portioned off; and the lands, though somewhat wasted, are wide, and the followers faithful.

"All this is true, madam, yet I question whether the circumstances would weigh one jot in guiding Marcelly's determination."

"And as to his vices, as you call them—what are they? The mere ebullitions of youth. Follies, excesses, which years will certainly check; and which need but this single act to destroy them in the bud. His heart is good, and his disposition noble—is it not so?"

"I am willing to believe that you say no more of him than he deserves."

"Well then, you cannot imagine that a young woman is hurried into a connexion unfavourable to her own happiness, if she be prevailed on to wed a man so circumstanced. You are neither so young nor so romantic as to believe, that love before marriage is essential to happiness afterwards."

"There may be, and I doubt not are, many cases, where persons marrying as you describe, have found no reason to regret that they did so."

"Well then, taking all this for granted; and presuming always—what has not yet been proved—that the girl were inexorable to argument and entreaty, you could not say that any serious wrong was done, were a little gentle compulsion exercised in bending her to her own advantage. Such things have occurred before now on the north side of the Grampians."

"I am not ignorant," replied Parson Neil, coldly, "that this and other outrages have been perpetrated in our country. But I never heard the practice defended; and I trust that I shall not hear of its being renewed."

Mrs. Mac Diarmid looked at Parson Neil with a stern yet penetrating glance. She saw that his brow was darkened; and conscious that she had gone somewhat farther than it was prudent to do, she strove to divert his suspicions from her real design.

"You mistake," said she; "I am far from vindicating the deed, when perpetrated, as it has been, by open violence. I spoke only of such compulsion as a parent has a right to

exercise, and to which a child that knows her duty never fails to submit."

"I am the last man in the world," replied the Parson, the frown passing from his countenance, "to impose limits on the paternal authority. There is but one power superior in degree to that of a father over his child—the power of the Creator over the creature. So long as the earthly parent shall exercise his undoubted privilege, subject to the will of the common Parent of all, neither human laws, nor what is termed public opinion, have a right to interfere. But it is the first law of nature, that a parent shall not exercise cruelty towards his offspring; and you, my dear madam, would be loud in condemning the monster that disregarded that law."

"It may be so," rejoined the lady hurriedly, "though much depends on the interpretation put upon the phrase cruelty. However, we will not discuss the subject farther. I have told you how both Allan and myself are circumstanced; that his happiness, nay his respectability, depends on his union with Marcelly; and that I cannot know a minute's peace while I am aware that he is miserable. I ask of you no more than that you will join your influence with mine in seeking to bring about an event which will render the widow and the orphan of Norman Mac Diarmid happy; which connot affect injuriously any human being besides. Am I justified in advancing this petition?—is it such as you can conscientiously grant?"

"I cannot tell you my dear madam, how much I am distressed, both by the terms of your request, and the manner in which you urge it. You ask me to use my influence towards the attainment of one particular object, with which any interference in me would be justly considered by the other party as impertinent; and you press the matter, as if with me rested the power to decide one way or the other. How am I to answer you? If I say that I cannot accomplish your wishes, you will doubt my inclination to obey you. If I say that I will not so much as endeavour to cheat a young girl, whom I love as my own daughter, into the perpetration of a deed against which her heart recoils, you will accuse me of base ingratitude towards the house of my patron and benefactor. And above all, you address me in the tone, and with the manner of a suppliant. How am I to meet all this? For heaven's sake, spare me the pain of meeting it at all; and if my advice have any value in your eyes, abstain, at least for the present, from prosecuting your design farther. As Allan's character now stands, neither

Marcelly nor her father would listen to the proposed union for a moment. Let a year or two pass over his head—let him acquire other and better habits in the place to which he is going, and then leave the young people to arrange the matter for themselves. Marcelly is a sensible girl. The mere defects in his features will never weigh with her in an affair of so much importance; nor is it impossible, that when she finds her cousin what he ought to be, in reputation and moral conduct, the partiality of her childhood may revive. At all events, do not urge me, under existing circumstances, to stand forward as the advocate of one, my first duty towards whom is reproof and correction."

Mrs. Mac Diarmid saw, that to continue the subject with one who entered into it so unwillingly, would serve no purpose. She, therefore, observed, with a good deal of bitterness, that she had expected other things at his hand; but that, doubtless, he knew best how far it became him to interfere in matters of so much delicacy. She then led the way to the parlour, where, as has been already shown, breakfast was consumed in no very cheerful or talkative mood by any of the party.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mortified at the failure of an attempt on the success of which she had confidently relied, Mrs. Mac Diarmid abstained for awhile, after her son's departure, from seeking any other indirect means of influencing the inclinations of her niece. She controlled herself, moreover, so far as to shun a direct appeal either to Marcelly or her father; towards both of whom, indeed, she began to experience feelings different from those which were wont to animate her. But the heart-rending and sorrowful letters which at intervals reached her from Edinburgh, gradually overcame her scruples. Both pride and prudence gave way under the influence of strong maternal affection; and though her heart revolted at the thought, she determined to become

herself a suitor to the girl whom she had reared as her own.

Marcelly, whose affection for her aunt fell short only of the love which she bore to her father—if, indeed, it fell short even of that—spent a portion of every day at Glenarroch. The cloud which sat on her relative's brow, and which she naturally attributed to grief occasioned by the separation from her son, the kind-hearted girl strove by the display of a thousand winning arts to dispel; and soured as Mrs. Mac Diarmid's feelings were, the natural attentions of her niece did not always fail of producing their effect. There were moments, indeed, when the associations connected with times gone by exercised their full force over her; and she would kiss Marcelly through her tears and pray Heaven to bless her: yet the recollection of Allan's miseries would return even while the words were on her lips, and she would shrink back from the embrace which she had herself invited. All this occasioned much distress, as well as a good deal of anxiety to Marcelly, who would not permit herself to believe, either that Allan had made a confidant of his mother, or that, if he had, the circumstance could produce the slightest change in her aunt's sentiments.

It was on a beautiful morning in October when Marcelly and her aunt were strolling along the margin of the loch, that the post, a functionary who reached the district once a fortnight, put a couple of letters into the hand of the latter. She looked at the superscriptions of both, and perceiving that one came from Allan, she sat down upon a rock and hastily opened it. As she read on, Marcelly did not fail to perceive that the expression of happy eagerness which pervaded her countenance at first, gradually faded away. A cast of bitter sorrow succeeded; her cheek flushed, and became pale again; and a single tear, round, large, and unbroken, fell upon the paper. Mrs. Mac Diarmid was not generally given to weep. Her passions, though violent, rarely showed themselves as the passions of women are apt to do; and perhaps she suffered the more intensely, because her sorrows were secret. But on the present occasion Nature had her way. She laid down the letter upon her knees, and burying her face in her hands, wept bitterly.

"Dearest aunt," exclaimed Marcelly, throwing her arm round her relative's neck, and joining her own tears with those which stole from between the mourner's fingers—"do not weep so. I never saw you shed tears except when some dire calamity had befallen: for heaven's sake dry them

now, and whatever evil tidings that letter may bring, take comfort—God may yet convert them into joy."

"Never, Marcelly," replied her aunt, sobbing bitterly. "There is no hope of joy for the widowed bosom on this side the grave. I am broken-hearted, Marcelly, and there is but one being in existence that can heal the wound—but from that quarter I have no hope."

"Do not say so, dear aunt; Allan may yet become all that you could desire. He has gone astray, I allow; but he is young, and a little farther intercourse with the world will doubtless cure him of his weakness. He is well, I trust, and happy."

"Of his health, Marcelly, I am told nothing; I, therefore, presume that he is well—but as to happiness—no, girl, Allan is the most miserable wretch that breathes the air of life."

"I hope not," replied Marcelly, timidly, "I am sure that he ought not to be so; I do not know any thing that can render him so, except it be himself."

"There again you are in error, if, indeed, I may speak of that as an error which is hardly grounded in mistake. Allan is miserable, but his miseries may all be traced back to another source than himself."

"He takes too much to heart the personal deformity with which it has pleased Providence to visit him," replied Marcelly; "but," and her voice faltered, "I trust the time may come when better thoughts shall enter into his mind."

"Marcelly," said her aunt, solemnly, "why all this equivocation? Why attribute an effect of which you are aware, to causes with which it is in no way connected? You, child—you who were the companion of his boyhood—you, whom I nurtured with the same care—whom I loved with the same tenderness as if you had been my own—you, Marcelly, are the cause of Allan's misery, and mine. Allan loves you, dotes upon you, and you have rejected him!"

Marcelly gasped for breath, and was silent. The tears which had chased each other down her cheeks were arrested in middle course, and she could only gaze upon her aunt with a subdued and a beseeching eye. The latter continued—

"Yes, Marcelly, I have at length communicated to you the secret which has preyed upon my vitals ever since I became acquainted with it; and unsuitable as the act may here, on my bended knees, and in the sight of Heav *implore you to take pity* both upon me and my son. Re *the anxious hours* that I have devoted to your infancy

the many sleepless nights that I have spent beside your cradle; by the endearments of early days—the fondness which grew with your growth, and strengthened with your strength; by that warm and motherly love which I bear towards you still, I entreat you to have mercy upon me! Allan, my only child—Allan, the son of your father's friend—Allan, the widow's hope, woos you for his bride. Reject him not, as you hope for peace when you become a mother yourself, or desire to save this overloaded heart from breaking."

"Oh rise, madam! my dear aunt, rise, I beseech, I entreat you. Let me kneel to you; but oh do not you kneel to me! I will do every thing that you wish—I will become your menial—I will toil for you by night and by day—I will cast myself, if you desire it, into the deep water below our feet—but oh, do not, do not ask me to become Allan's wife!"

"And why not, girl? replied Mrs. Mac Diarmid, rising. "Why not become the wife of Allan Mac Diarmid? Is the blood in your veins purer than his? Has your father's name been heard where his father's was unknown? Is he a bastard and an outcast, that you should contract aught of contamination by linking your fate with his?"

"No, no, dear aunt; he is every way my equal—my superior, if you will—for he is a man, and I a weak girl. Yet I cannot be his. No, no, I cannot, cannot, God is my witness."

"Cannot! That is an expression which I do not understand. Say that you will not, and then you speak plainly—no matter what the consequences of your determination may be."

"Alas, what an unfortunate creature am I," exclaimed Marcelly, the tears again bursting from their fountain, "to be the cause of unhappiness, where I would lay down my life to bring peace! Oh, my God, what have I done, that I should be thus visited!"

"Yet it is in your power, dear Marcelly, to heal the wound. I will not press you to a pledge. I do not now ask you to give your faith to Allan; but at least assure me that you will strive to overcome that antipathy which has too much hindered you from seeing him as others see him. You are not a worldly girl, I know. I would not, therefore, speak to you of matters so debasing as settlements; but consider, I pray you, how a union between your father's house *and his must* affect the interests of both in this country. And *then, think,* that not his happiness alone, but his respect-

ability, his character, his soul's health itself, are all, all at your mercy. Speak the word, Marcelly; say that you will give to my proposal more mature consideration, and that hereafter, be it years hence ——"

"Oh no, no, dear aunt, press me no farther," interrupted Marcelly; "I cannot, may not promise that which will never be fulfilled. Allan knows the state of my feelings perfectly. As a sister, as a friend, I will strive to regard him, but more than that I could not do, were life and death in the balance. Allan will see in the Low Country girls fairer and more attractive than me. Some one of these will drive my image from his thoughts; and may God grant that it be done speedily!"

"It is well, Marcelly," replied her aunt proudly, "it is very well. I am answered as I deserved to be, when I so far forgot myself as to bend these stubborn knees before my sister's child. You reject my entreaties, you despise my arguments; you hold at naught the wretchedness which I have laid open to you—perhaps somewhat too weakly. But you mistake, girl. Allan's happiness is not a thing to be thrown away for the indulgence of a child's humour or a woman's caprice. Your father shall take this matter up; and if his regard for the memory of one who fought and bled that he might sleep peaceably at home, be what he says it is, you will find that a harder task awaits you than the mere rejection of my counsels."

Mrs. Mac Diarmid turned away as she spoke, and walked haughtily in the direction of Glenarroch. She drew back from the grasp with which Marcelly would have detained her, and paid no heed to the exclamation of profound grief that burst from the maiden's lips. Marcelly was totally overcome. She shed tears abundantly, and with a swelling heart and tardy pace returned home.

For some days after the occurrence of this adventure scarcely any intercourse took place between the families at Glenarroch and Ardmore. Depending little upon that appeal to which she had referred rather in pique than under the serious expectation of profiting by it, Mrs. Mac Diarmid experienced a strong disinclination to hazard it, though she continued to hope almost against hope, with the pertinacity which persons usually display when driven, as it were, into a corner. Not that she trusted all to the result of her brother-in-law's interference. On the contrary, as she had long harboured certain vague notions of arrangements to be moulded into form only in a last extremity, so she began now seriously to look around for fitting instru-

ments by which to realize her day-dreams. But before any effectual steps could be taken towards the accomplishment of these wishes, an explanation was forced upon her, which overthrew at once whatever reliance she had thus far ventured to repose on the partiality of Ardmore towards the memory of his friend.

The depression of spirits under which his daughter laboured, as well as the sudden cessation of her visits to her aunt, had not failed to attract the attention of Ardmore. He demanded an explanation, which was given fully, though not without some reluctance on the part of Marcelly; and anxious to set the matter at rest for ever, he sought an immediate interview with Mrs. Mac Diarmid. It was not of the most conciliatory nature. His nephew's delinquencies were too well known to Fergus to render him over-delicate in the tone of his remarks; and, like his countrymen in general, he was apt not to affix more than their legitimate value upon the feelings even of a mother. He flatly informed Mrs. Mac Diarmid, that were Norman himself to rise from the grave and request his consent to the proposed union, he would refuse it. "It is not that I think more harshly than need be of the common follies and excesses of youth. Many a wild colt has turned out a noble war-steed, and Allan may, perhaps, redeem even yet his character. But I tell you fairly, sister, that rather than see Marcelly joined to him as he is, I would follow her to her grave. I should be sorry to hurt your feelings—but such is my determination, and by —— I will keep it!"

"And with what have you to charge Allan, beyond the ordinary follies of youth? Of what has he been guilty, that even his father's friend should turn his back upon him?"

"Guilty!" exclaimed Ardmore, warming as he went on; "there is scarce a crime that man could commit, there is not a meanness into which man can fall, that he has not perpetrated. What! give my child to the tender mercies of the most cruel and perfidious monster that ever disgraced the name of Mac Diarmid! Go and ask old Donald Dhu where his grandson lies, and bid him tell you who sent him there. Inquire of Lochiel whether this hopeful son of yours have not by his violence and fraud endangered that which is of more importance by far than all the blood in his body. No, no, sister—the follies of youth may be got over, but murder and violence, and treachery to boot—not to mention a depraved taste even in the choice of associates—these do not *come under* the head of youthful follies."

"*Is it to* me that all this is said," demanded the latter,

with much warmth, "the widow of Norman Mac Diarmid, and the mother of his son? And am I thus reviled, and the honour of my name impugned by one who has received some kindness even at these poor hands, when he most needed it?"

"Sister, sister," replied Ardmore, "I mean no offence to you; I cast no reflection upon your honour, or that of your name. I only tell you in this private room what is openly told by one to another throughout the whole country; and I do so from no other motive than to convince you, if I can, that there are strong reasons why I should put no force on my daughter's inclinations. Zounds! were the young man as beautiful as Apollo, and as noble in his nature as Lycurgus, I would still leave the girl free to have him or refuse him at her own pleasure."

"Then there remains no alternative," ejaculated Mrs. Mac Diarmid, bitterly; "I had hoped that things would not come to this—but God's will be done, I cannot help it."

"Ay, now you speak like a reasonable woman," rejoined Fergus. "There is no help for it, indeed. It is a pity, perhaps, that the boy should have taken this idle fancy into his head, over and above all the other crooked ways that he has; but if the last could be as easily set straight as the first, we might yet expect to see him filling his father's brogues. But however that may be, there *is* no help for it. Marcelly shall choose a husband for herself, when she is in the mind, and neither you nor I will trouble ourselves to choose one for her."

So saying, the good man rose, and perfectly convinced in his own mind that he had brought his sister to reason, wished her good morning. "As to what I may have said about Allan's infirmities, don't let that distress you. It is too true every word of it—but he is away from the reach of scandal now, and when he returns, let us hope that he will come back a new man. Marcelly shall spend her mornings with you as usual, and her evenings too occasionally. Only no more tormenting the girl about Allan. All that is at an end, and, as you justly observe, there is no help for it." He had walked down the avenue all this while, and before his sentence came to a close was already considerably out of hearing.

CHAPTER XV.

EVERY one who happens to have read Captain Burt's Letters from Scotland, or the late excellent General David Stewart's "Sketches of the Characters and Manners of his Countrymen," must be aware that there existed among the Scottish Highlanders, a few generations ago, ties not less enduring, in many instances infinitely more tender, than those of mere relationship, The children of a gentleman's family were then rarely nursed at home, but committed, for the most part, to the care of some married woman, in whose fidelity the parents could repose implicit confidence. As the act of rearing the young laird was an honour much coveted by all the retainers, so the affection entertained towards him through life, not by his nurse alone, but by her husband and children, knew no bounds. The old couple with the appellation of his foster father and mother—their offspring recognised as his foster brothers and sisters—claimed ever after to hold the most important places about his person; and besides being honoured by the clan, were ready at all moments to obey his behest, no matter how great the sacrifices they might be required personally to make. Even life itself has been repeatedly given away, not by one, but by a succession of foster brothers, in order to secure the safety of the chief; and as to any minor requisition, it must be of a strange nature indeed, did these, the devoted servants of his will, hesitate to obey it. In one word, there was no law of God or man—no bond of nature or of habit which they regarded with the degree of absolute devotion of heart and feeling bestowed upon their chief; whose caprices they would gratify, whose interests they would seek to promote, through evil report as well as good, by foul means as well as by fair.

As soon as her brother-in-law quitted her, Mrs. Mac Diarmid, after devoting some minutes to deep, and as it ap-

peared, painful thought, threw a mantle about her shoulders, and walked abroad. She took on this occasion a direction opposite to that which she had followed when Marcelly was her companion; and crossing a low shoulder of the hill, at the base of which the house of Glenarroch was placed, descended into a bleak and boggy glen, surrounded on all sides by mountains. At the farther extremity of that wild hollow, stood a single shieling, composed of loose stones, partially daubed with clay, and roofed over with bunches of long heather, laid one above the other in the rudest possible manner. A couple of apertures in the wall, partially stuffed up with fragments of old plaiding, served to admit as much of light and air as the inhabitants appeared to desire; while a sort of wicker or basket-work hurdle, supplied the place of a door, beneath the lintel of which, even a well-grown boy must stoop, ere he could gain admittance. Not a tree nor a shrub of any description grew around that hovel. Garden, too, there was none, unless, indeed, a patch of light soil, amid which some abortive attempt had been made to rear a few potatoes, may be considered as such; for neither pot-herbs nor vegetables could find depth enough of earth to grow; and as to ornamental vegetation, that, of course, was wholly out of the question.

Towards that miserable hovel, planted at the farther extremity of an extensive moss-hag, and closed in on three sides by a rough and precipitous corry, Mrs. Mac Diarmid directed her steps. That the shieling was inhabited, a thick volume of peat smoke, which issued as well from the windows as from a hole in the centre of the roof, gave evidence. Nevertheless, no living thing might be seen to move about its locale. Neither children nor pigs—no, not even the universal attendants on a Highland bothy, a few barn-door fowls, clustered around its site; the aspect of which conveyed, to the very extreme of the feeling, a sense of utter and dreary desolation. It appeared, however, that to the dreary aspect of the place the lady was not unaccustomed. She advanced firmly, and pushing back the wicker door, found herself at once admitted within the penetralia of this dark abode.

For a moment or two, the effect of so sudden a passage from the clear light of day to so dim an atmosphere, deprived her of the full power of vision. She saw, indeed, burning in the middle of the chamber, a dull turf fire; beside which, upon a low stool sat a human figure; but the smoke which curled *up to the rafters* and then fell down again in dense *volumes, totally* prevented her from determining whether

the occupant was a man or a woman. Nor, in truth, had she been a stranger here, would her judgment have received any effectual assistance from the tones of a low wild song, which, in a cracked and coarse voice, the individual in question was singing. But Mrs. Mac Diarmid was not a stranger here. She advanced, after a moment's pause, towards the fire, and laying her hand on the singer's shoulder, said—

Look up, Elspeth, look up, and listen. There is evil to the house of Glenarroch, and the widow of Mac Diarmid comes to thee for advice and assistance."

"Oich, oich!" replied the old crone, raising her sightless eyes towards the speaker: "who comes to old Elspeth now? —who are you, and what is it that you want?"

"Do not you know me, Elspeth? Has the sound of my voice become so strange to your ears, that you cannot recognise it? Have the clouds of old age passed so thickly across your eyes, that they are unable to distinguish your own foster daughter?"

"Is it indeed you, my honoured lady—my own darling child?" cried the hag, rising as she spoke, and extending her long, bony, and smoke-dried hands towards Mrs. Mac Diarmid. "What brings you to old Elspeth, and alone too, without the following that befits the widow of Mac Diarmid? Alas! were my brave boys living now, it would be no matter, the sword and the halter have left one to serve you still; and my curse shall wither him in his youth, if he hold back in your hour of need. Sit, lady, sit down and tell me all that affects you; for well I wot it is affliction only that drives you to seek counsel of me."

"You have had but too much reason to complain, Elspeth," replied Mrs. Mac Diarmid, drawing a stool close to that of the old woman, and sitting herself, in order that the other might not be kept standing. "Mac Diarmid was, perhaps, too strict, too stern if you will, considering the relation in which the culprit stood towards me, and as a necessary consequence towards himself. But the deed is done—it cannot now be recalled; and the lapse of sixteen long years has, I hoped, taught even his mother to forget, that Hemistoun Ichan died neither in the battle-field, nor in his bed."

"Forget, lady!" exclaimed the old woman; "think you that I shall ever forget? Oh, no, no! The eagles love their brood, the foxes love their young, and poor and old, and despised though I be, my offspring are not less dear to me than theirs are to them. Had he perished as his brother did, in open and fair battle—nay, had any mouth but that of Mac

man Mac Diarmid sealed his doom—harsh, and cruel, and undeserved as that doom was, I might have forgotten it; but never, while the sands of life run, shall I or can I forget that dark and dismal day when the child of my old age died the death of a dog. Ohon! ohon! Hemish the fair-haired, Hemish the fleetest foot, the stoutest arm in all the glen! —that the crows and the vultures should have fed upon thy flesh, given to them too by ———"

"My dear Elspeth," interposed the lady, "let us not revert to a transaction which, whether justifiable or not, I would now give all that I am worth to recall. Have you not been revenged? How long did Norman survive that act of stern, though perhaps, merited severity? But let that pass for the present. I am here, Elspeth—I who drew the stream of life from your breast—broken-hearted, and in the lowest depth of misery. Will you wreak your vengeance on me?"

"On thee, my own darling? No, so help me Heaven! Neither to thee, nor to aught that belongs to thee, does Elspeth desire evil. Norman himself I have forgiven—long, long forgiven—because he was the husband of my child; for thee, say how I can best prove the devotion which I bear towards thee, and I will obey thy wishes."

"Then hear me, Elspeth. My son, dear to me as the light of heaven, is rejected by one whom he has long wooed. Her father, instead of urging the girl to her own happiness, supports her in her obstinacy, and Allan is driven dishonoured from his home and his kindred. Elspeth, say how it becomes Mac Diarmid's widow to act, and tell me how the son of Mac Diarmid may be rendered happy, and saved from total ruin."

"I too had a son," replied the old woman, reverting to the original subject of their conversation—"a son, who was to me a thousand times dearer than light and life—but where is he now?"

"Oh, Elspeth!" interrupted Mrs. Mac Diarmid, "if you do not intend to drive me mad, recall your thoughts from that black image. Speak to me not of the past, but of the present. Your griefs are beyond human power to redress—mine may be meliorated, provided I can find one true friend among all that have eaten Mac Diarmid's bread, and profess to revere his memory."

"That do not I, lady!" cried the beldam fiercely, as she turned her sightless balls and shrivelled countenance full towards her foster daughter: "Mac Diarmid's memory is *accursed, and will be* accursed, by her whom he robbed of *her child. And as to his* bread—have I eaten it? has any

one in whose veins my blood flows, eaten it—since that dark hour?"

"Then God help me!" exclaimed Mrs. Mac Diarmid, rising and wringing her hands. "My very foster-mother forsakes me—I am deserted, indeed!"

"Not so, dear child," cried the old woman, holding out her hand as if to detain her; "thou art not deserted, at least not by me;—but if I am to serve thee in aught, never speak of the memory of one, whose name I have sworn not again to utter—because I cannot bless, and would not willingly curse it. What would you of me? Ask for yourself, and the hand that now detains, will be held in the fire till it consume away, provided such be your pleasure."

"You have one son left, Elspeth—an outcast from his clan, it is true, and if report do not belie him, a man of desperate habits. Is your control over him what it once was? will he obey your mandates when you issue them?"

"Will he!" exclaimed the old woman proudly;—"will he not? He dare not disobey, and would not if he dared. But what of him?"

"Demand for him what reward you choose,—restoration to the place which he once held in Mac Diarmid's family—a return to the lands which his father occupied—any thing, every thing which it is in my power to give, and it will be granted on a single condition."

"And what is that condition?"

"That he contrive to carry off Marcelly and hide her in some remote place till, either by persuasion or otherwise, she consent to make Allan happy, and herself respected. Will Ranald do this act of kindness at his mother's bidding!—not for Mac Diarmid's son, but for his own foster-sister—for thy foster-daughter?"

"Lady," replied the old woman, after a long pause, "you have laid a heavy burden upon me. *I* can forgive Mac Diarmid's offspring, because they are the offspring of one to whom these withered breasts gave suck; but Ranald is fiery and relentless, and his brother's murder has never passed, and will never pass from his mind. For thee, individually, he would do all that man can do;—but to promote the welfare of Mac Diarmid's son,—can I expect such a sacrifice at his hands?—ought I to require it?"

"Then mock me no more with protestations of affection!" exclaimed Mrs. Mac Diarmid indignantly; "it was not from *thee* that the fountain of my young blood was supplied. No—*I* was in error when I looked for support, even in my extremity, from one on whom I have no claims—on who

never could have had the shadow of a claim. Farewell, Elspeth; and may God and thine own heart forgive thee, as freely as I do!"

"Stop, stop, madam!" cried Elspeth eagerly; "I did not reject thy bidding, harsh and ungrateful though it be; neither did I say that Ranald would reject it. But the sacrifice is almost too great for human nature. I only doubted whether it were just to desire it at his hands. You shall not, however be deserted. Though my heart recoil at the idea, I will lay my commands upon Ranald, and I have deceived myself, if even here he refuse to obey them."

"Elspeth, I am thine for ever. Accomplish this object, on which all our hopes of comfort depend, and may Heaven deal with me and mine, as we forget or remember that we owe every thing to thee! When shall I see you again?"

"Ranald returns to-night," replied the crone—"at least such was his assurance when he set out. If my lady do not object to visit her nurse again to-morrow, she shall know how he stands affected."

"Then to-morrow, about this time, look for me. Farewell, Elspeth—be urgent, and all will yet be well."

"All will yet be well!" exclaimed the old woman, as soon as the receding sound of Mrs. Mac Diarmid's footsteps made her aware that she was alone. "Yes, it is ever thus. We have no feelings to respect, no hopes to gratify, no longings to appease. The poor vassal must live for his lord, and die for that same lord too, whenever the fitting moment comes; but as to consulting his own inclinations, or seeking his own profit, that were a crime never to be forgiven. And had not I a mother's claim as well as she?—did I not lay bare this aching bosom, and pray for the life of my son—ay, even to her whom that bosom nourished—to no purpose?—No—I was told that in the administration of the laws women could not interfere; that Mac Diarmid was inexorable, and that, painful as the sacrifice was, private feeling must give way to a sense of public duty! Yet she comes to me, now that there is grief at home, and requires that the brother of Hemish shall put his own life in jeopardy, for the purpose of obtaining a bride for the son of his brother's murderer! And I have consented to this. Well, and am I not bound to sacrifice every thing for her? Has she not drawn her substance from this withered breast—is she not twined around this broken heart by a cord which no injuries, no wrongs will ever be able to loosen? Hemish, if the softness *of thy mother's yielding* offend thy gallant spirit, forgive *her; but she cannot act* otherwise than she does; for even

thou, her eldest and her best, wert not more dear to her soul, than is the child whom she reared from its mother's womb."

These words the old woman uttered aloud, as if incapable of exercising the powers of thought apart from the faculty of speech. It appeared, however, that the act of soliloquizing brought with it a soothing effect; for her ideas soon ran back again into another channel, and she resumed, as if nothing had occurred to interrupt it, the low wild song which she was in the act of singing when Mrs. Mac Diarmid entered.

CHAPTER XVI.

While these events were passing, both in Edinburgh and Glenarroch, Parson Neil, whose unlooked for separation from his pupil has been glanced at rather than narrated, was acting no unimportant part on the great stage of public events to which our history refers.

In spite of the signal defeat which their cause had sustained in 1715, and of the proscriptions and confiscations that followed, the Jacobites, as the adherents of the house of Stuart were termed, ceased not to encourage a confident anticipation that a second restoration would yet be effected, and themselves, as a necessary consequence, rewarded for their fidelity. Neither the abortive affair of Glenshiels, nor the overthrow of the numerous plots which ensued upon it, tended in any material degree to change their views or repress their expectations. So long, indeed, as the King's government resisted, however feebly, the policy of the new dynasty, and held back from rendering Great Britain the mere treasury of the Electorate of Hanover, the Jacobites, if they lost none of their original supporters, made little progress in the art of proselytising. But in proportion as this wise and just policy was abandoned, men's eyes began to be turned with anxiety and desire towards the survivors of the ancient race. Nor was the undisguised partiality of the two first Georges to their hereditary dominions the sole, nor perhaps the principal cause of discontent throughout

the nation. The South Sea scheme, whilst it brought ruin upon multitudes, and gave a serious shock to public credit, operated as all panics do, in rendering even such as escaped the danger, distrustful of the resources of a Government, under which so gross a delusion had been practised. In like manner, the imposition of a malt-tax led to serious discontent, particularly in Scotland, which the subsequent enactment of the excise laws tended in no degree to diminish; while the disarming act rankled in the breast of all on whom it affixed the mark of disgrace, rendering more hostile than ever the bravest and most warlike portion of the Scottish people.

With so many and such palpable grounds of complaint to work upon, it would have been strange indeed, had the advocates of indefeasible hereditary right failed to stir up heart-burnings and jealousy of the powers that were, in all quarters. Plot after plot was concocted and arranged, only that it might be abandoned; for many an agent of the Stuarts moved about unsuspected, because his real designs were concealed under the ordinary guise of conspiracy—a devoted attachment to the people's rights. But though the intriguers were thus busy, they by no means stood alone in a feeling of soreness, to call it by no stronger term, towards the existing Government. Whatever advantages there might be in perspective, Scotland had as yet derived no benefits from the Revolution. Her nationality was admitted to have been given up at the Union; she was a sharer in all the burdens that England bore; and her commerce being still rather nominal than real, these, though pitiful in amount, affected her very seriously. The consequence was, that a conviction began by degrees to gain ground, that a positive error had been committed in the expulsion of the whole of the direct line. James, it was said, received only his deserts; but had we taken his son into our own keeping, and educated him in sound principles, we should have exhibited a greater degree of political prudence than was displayed in the adoption of a foreign prince, and the necessary mixing up of this island in all the mazes and entanglements of Continental diplomacy. But when men began to speculate thus, they had already taken a decided step towards positive Jacobitism. It needed only an imprudent act or two on the part of the Government, to blow up the growing discontent into a flame.

While many gentlemen in the Lowlands, originally devoted to the house of Brunswick, found that devotion grow

cold under a contemplation of the supposed grievances to which their country was subjected, other and still more direct causes of complaint prepared the fiery Highlanders for almost any enterprise, however desperate. When the disarming act, already referred to, was carried into effect, several independent companies were raised for the purpose of preserving order, and maintaining public peace throughout the Highlands. Into these, six in number, the sons of tacksmen and the higher order of tenantry were induced to enter, in consequence of an assurance solemnly given, that they should never be required to serve beyond the borders of their own country; and during a space of nearly fourteen years, the pledge thus voluntarily tendered, suffered no violation. Even when imbodied as a regiment,—a change in their condition which occurred in 1739—the Black Watch, or Reicudan Du, continued still to exercise their functions within the Highland line; nor had it entered into the contemplation of any individual connected with them, that a more general service would ever be required at their hands. But the state of his Continental affairs, as it had already induced the sovereign to draw more freely than was agreeable upon the pecuniary resources of his English subjects, so it led him to overlook engagements entered into with his Highland soldiery, and to carry them beyond their recognised province. In the spring of 1743, the Black Watch, being assembled at Perth, were ordered to march upon London, ostensibly for the purpose of being reviewed by the King in person; in reality, that they might be rendered disposable for active operations in Flanders.

It is not our province to enter into any inquiries as to the policy of this step, nor yet to detail the consequences which resulted from it. Enough is done when we remind the reader, that the Black Watch performed their march; that the King, without waiting to review the troops, whom he had on this single pretext brought from their homes, set sail for the Continent; and that the Highlanders, misled in part by mischievous incendiaries, in part indignant at the deceit passed upon them, broke up from their quarters at Hounslow without leave, and endeavoured to make the best of their way back to the mountains. They were pursued, surrounded, and compelled to surrender; and while two or three suffered death as deserters, the remainder were drafted into different corps, and dispersed all over the world.

It were, perhaps, going too far were we to affirm, that the men composing this magnificent corps, were all cordially

attached to the reigning family. Probably the case was not so, though care might be, and doubtless was taken, to select the officers from among gentlemen of whose political principles no doubt could be entertained; but the very fact of their carrying arms in King George's name, at a moment when the rest of their countrymen were prohibited from doing so, ought of itself to have rendered the Government cautious how they dealt with them. Of this, indeed, ample proof was given; for as soon as intelligence reached the North of the species of treatment which the Black Watch had received, the indignation of their countrymen was roused to the most alarming degree. "Where was the advantage of loyalty over its opposite?" "The very men to whom the King was indebted for the continuance of his authority in the Highlands had been shipped off like criminals to the Plantations, after they were foully deceived into committing themselves within the power of their hereditary enemies." "It was a national insult—a public wrong, which all men of all opinions were bound to avenge." Scotland had been treated as a conquered province, and the best of her sons as serfs."

Ever on the watch to take advantage of events as they occurred, the agents of the exiled family became more and more busy from day to day. The most exaggerated reports were circulated touching the injustice put both upon the English and Scottish people by their Hanoverian master. He was represented as wantonly sacrificing the lives of his British troops in every action; as preferring his Germans to all places of honour and profit about his person; as keeping up a large army of foreigners for the purpose of establishing an absolute monarchy in England. In each house of Parliament, moreover, a strong party was formed, if not unfriendly to the person of the reigning monarch, undeniably dissatisfied with the measures pursued by his Government. Of that fact ample use was made—indeed, it became by degrees a doubtful matter, even on the score of self-interest, whether those had not chosen the winning side, by whom the cause of the Stuarts was adopted.

While the elements of a powerful faction were thus arranging themselves at home, France openly espoused the cause of James, and made ostentatious preparations for the conquest of Great Britain. Troops were mustered in Picardy; they embarked, and the fleet put to sea, while the young Chevalier Charles Edward established himself in Paris for the purpose of following up the blow, so soon as it

should be struck: but the fortunes of the House of Hanover prevailed, and the foreign expedition dispersed, without effecting any thing. Though bitterly disappointed, the Jacobites were far from losing heart at this failure. Happily, they had as yet made no open movement, by which means both their persons and their property were secure; and hence, though compelled to restrict themselves to the old system of secret intrigue, they contrived to keep the hopes of their party from sinking, by exaggerated representations of their strength even then, and assurances of admirable arrangements in progress for the future.

Among the most devoted and confidential agents of the party, there was none who surpassed Parson Neil, either in intelligence or in zeal. After lying close, as the phrase went, during the heat of the day, till the memory of former treasons had grown faint, Neil took the field again with fresh alacrity on the first appearance of a change; and being generally known and universally trusted among the leaders of the Jacobite faction, he found frequent opportunities of doing the cause good service. At a period when the slightest act of individual indiscretion might have brought ruin on hundreds of the oldest and best families in the kingdom, the presence of a man, towards whom there was no necessity for exercising reserve—who could carry from point to point, without the hazard attending written despatches, the outlines of plans, and the views and wishes of different parties—who was known to possess in an extraordinary degree the qualities of prudence and caution—who could be trusted with a secret, and left to use his knowledge according as circumstances might require: the presence of such a man at such a moment could not fail to be felt as peculiarly advantageous by a body of persons that staked fortune and life itself on the chances of overturning the established Government. The current of our history has not led us to refer to the frequent excursions in which Parson Neil, during two or three years previous to the removal of Allan to the Lowlands, had indulged; but when we state here, that a very considerable portion of his time was spent upon the road, the reader will be at no loss in surmising to what ends his journeys were directed.

One principal purpose to which the Parson's talents were applied, was to keep up a frequent and friendly correspondence between the stanch old Jacobite chiefs, and those converts to cavalier opinions, whom passing events rendered more and more numerous every day. This was a matter of

peculiar delicacy, for it did not always happen, that recent agreements wiped out the remembrance of ancient antipathies, while the prejudices originating in differences distinct from those affecting the civil government of the country, proved in various instances extremely difficult to control. Of the original Jacobites, for example, almost all were either Roman Catholics, or Episcopalians. The former, indeed, scarcely affected to anticipate the re-establishment of their church; but the latter looked upon the restoration of Episcopacy as inseparable from that of the exiled family; indeed, with them, the phrases Whig and Presbyterian were synonymous, and equally applied as terms of contempt. Now of the men who began to swell the ranks of the disaffected, subsequently to the adoption of the impolitic measures alluded to above, almost all were members of the Presbyterian church. It required a great deal of management so to mediate between these parties, as that grounds of disunion should be avoided; and in nothing was the Parson's tact more conspicuously shown, than in the adjustment of that delicate point. Nevertheless, he did adjust it to the perfect satisfaction of all concerned. Willing, in common with the majority of his brethren, to sacrifice, should necessity require, the temporal interests of his order, he took care to repress, both by precept and example, the exaggerated zeal of the laity attached to his communion; while he satisfied their rivals, that neither by him nor by the rest of the body, would an attempt be made to disturb the order of religion in the country, as it had been settled at the Revolution.

Among other influential persons whom the current of events had recently brought over, was the individual to whom the reader has already been introduced; first, as rendering service to the travellers in their hour of need, and latterly, as dismissing Allan with his credentials to Edinburgh. Descended from a Presbyterian stock, and educated in strict adherence to Revolution principles, Lawrence Blair, of Blairlogie, had carried his zeal in the cause of the reigning family as far as most men; having taken the field in 1715, under the Duke of Argyle, and maintained a troop of horse during the campaign at his own expense. In the house of Blairlogie, however, as in many others, there were differences of political creed; for it chanced that while one brother bore arms in defence of George the Second, another wielded his broadsword in the ranks of the Earl of Mar. This was at the time a matter of deep regret to the laird, who lamented it the more because Æneas's apostacy originated *in a cause* scarcely less offensive in his eyes than

act of apostacy itself. Æneas, an acomplished and gay young barrister, had formed an attachment to Miss Janet Menzies; of whom also the reader has already heard something, and who, about five-and-twenty years prior to the date when this narrative commenced, reigned one of the leading toasts of the Scottish metropolis. Now the Menzies were all devoted to the exiled dynasty. They were connected, moreover, by ties of blood, with many of the leading families on that side of the question, and claimed kindred, not remotely, with the arch-traitor Norman Mac Diarmid himself. Nevertheless, neither the remonstrances of a really generous brother, nor the prejudices early instilled into him, rendered Æneas proof against the allurements of the young lady's charms; and to become the lover of a fair Jacobite and a convert to her principles, was, at the period of which we are now writing, one and the same thing. Miss Janet Menzies plighted her troth to the young advocate as soon as he agreed to assume the white cockade, and she sent him forth to win her hand by perilling his own life in a contest which to all, except the enthusiastic, appeared desperate.

The trial was made, and failed, and Æneas Blair, with many other gentlemen who had thrown in their lot with the adventure, became a fugitive and proscribed. His brother earnestly solicited a pardon, and pleaded his own merits in extenuation of the errors of a mere youth; but his plea was totally disregarded, and during some months the young man was indebted to the fearless devotion of his mistress for the means of subsistence. Concealed in a cave in the side of a rock, she visited him daily from that dwelling which gave shelter to Parson Neil and his pupil after their flight from Stirling; conveying to him his food in her own hands, and risking more than life—reputation, in his defence. But all her care and tenderness availed not. The fiery and restless spirit of Æneas could not brook this protracted imprisonment. Of his brother's exertions he was not unaware, he anticipated from them a favourable result, and in an evil hour he quitted that concealment which had so long shielded him from the vengeance of the law. He was arrested in the house of Blairlogie itself; and being conveyed to Edinburgh, was, within the space of one week, tried, condemned, and executed as a traitor.

We are not required to describe the effect which this occurrence produced on the situation and prospects of the young man's betrothed bride. The terms in which she alluded to the events of "the fifteen," after twenty years

had in some degree softened down the recollection of them, may serve to point out how they operated at the moment; but of the influence which that impolitic deed had in giving a new current to the principles of the laird, it is necessary to say something. Blairlogie loved his brother with much more than a brother's love. They were all that remained of their race, and Æneas being several years his junior, had been treated by him from his infancy rather as a son than a brother. Nor had the course which Æneas adopted in politics thrown the slightest chill over that affection; for though he deplored the error, he ceased not to think of the culprit himself as of a boy misled by passion alone. Under these circumstances, but one result might be expected to follow the execution of so bloody a sentence. Lawrence Blair never forgave it. For a time, indeed, he adhered to his Whig principles, or rather deceived himself into a belief that he did so; but he now became a rigid and severe critic of every act which the government performed, both in its dealings with individuals and with Scotland. Nor was this all. The blandishments by which she had originally misled his brother were all forgotten, and he thought of Janet Menzies only as the beloved and faithful friend, who sheltered Æneas in his hour of distress, and now mourned over him broken-hearted.

These sentiments on his part soon led to the commencement of an intercourse which gradually ripened into friendship. He became a frequent visiter at Caldhame, a circumstance which excited neither suspicion nor surprise in the neighbourhood, because all men were aware of the particular attractions that drew him there; and he found more than one opportunity materially to serve a family, which had sacrificed much of its property to a sense of mistaken duty. The results may be stated in few words. A contemplation of the devoted loyalty of his friends, and the admiration which it was calculated to excite, wrought strongly, though imperceptibly, on a mind soured by a recollection of personal wrongs, and prepared it for that total change of feeling and principle which a few gross blunders on the part of the minister wrought out. The passing of the excise laws shook the loyalty of Blairlogie—the massacre of the Black Watch threw it to the ground; and he became in the end a zealous though a secret Jacobite, prepared to run all hazards for the purpose of effecting a restoration. Nor were his services less important to the cause than those of any other individual attached to it. His change of sentiment

being wholly unsuspected, even by the most furious of l
Whig neighbours, the disinclination which he displayed
take again a prominent part in politics was attributed, r
turally enough, to the recollection of his brother's fate alo
The consequence was, that he not only carried on his o
intrigues in comparative security, but proved the means
delivering many a suspected Jacobite from the dangers
too rigid an examination.

CHAPTER XVII.

We left Parson Neil stretched upon one of the mattresses which had been spread out for him and his pupil on the garret-floor at Caldhame. He had slept, he knew not how long, for it was yet profoundly dark, when a slight shake by the shoulder, and the sound of his name pronounced in an audible whisper, recalled him to his senses. Like other men accustomed to play a part in the management of conspiracies, the Parson always slumbered lightly, and regained at once, on opening his eyes, the full command of his faculties. His usual habits of vigilance and self-command did not forsake him on the present occasion. He recognised, by the shrouded light of a dark-lantern, the countenance of Mr. Blair as it bent over him, and sitting up, demanded, though with perfect calmness, whether danger threatened.

"I am not aware that it does," replied the laird; "but there are important matters to be arranged, in which both you and I must take our share of the labour. Rise and dress yourself, without disturbing the youth. I wait for you below, and our horses are saddled."

Mr. Blair spoke in a low tone, and retiring as he had come, with great caution, left Allan sound asleep. The Parson was not slow in obeying his instructions. He hastily equipped himself, and descended to the court, where he found his companion walking backwards and forwards wrapped up in a riding-cloak, while Callum stood by, holding three fresh horses by the bridle. The gentlemen immediately mounted without pausing to salute one another, and set forward at a brisk rate in the direction of Stirling.

They had approached within a mile, or something more, of the town, when Mr. Blair, who acted as guide, struck into a *by-path that turned* to the right, and pursued it with

increased speed. In a few minutes they found themselves in the centre of a long and straggling village, the irregular paving of which excited in the mind of Parson Neil uneasy anticipations of falling, and he began, as an inexperienced rider is apt to do under such circumstances, to rein in his steed. But his companion would not consent to the proposed change of pace. "Look to the east," said he; "the sky begins to redden already; and if we fail to reach our point ere the rustics are astir, the sooner we part company the better."

Neil felt the force of this argument, and acted upon it without remonstrance. He applied his spurs to his horse's flank, and the long trot growing into a canter, and the canter into a gallop, the little party were soon far advanced upon the road, and clear of all traces of human habitation.

A ride of an hour's continuance, which caused both men and steeds to breathe hard, brought them, through sundry fields and lanes, to a belt of tall trees planted closely together, and girdled in by a quickset hedge of considerable altitude. This they coursed for about a hundred yards, till a break in the hedge presented itself, through which Blair drove his horse without scruple, and was immediately followed by the others. Neil now saw by the increasing twilight that he was within the precincts of a park or domain, of which the surface was a good deal broken and diversified, as well as adorned with numerous clumps of oak, beech, and elm. But he had little leisure to observe very closely the nature of the scenery around him, for on turning the angle of a low green hill, a mansion, with its outbuildings, became visible. Towards it their steps were directed, and the proceedings of their guide soon satisfied the Parson that here, at least for a time, their toils were about to cease.

The pile in the rear of which the travellers halted, presented, in the gray and uncertain light of the dawn, a picturesque, if not an imposing aspect. Belonging to that order of houses which were constructed after the necessity for fortalices had ceased, and while as yet a taste for convenience and comfort exerted little influence over Scottish architecture, it consisted of a long and castellated centre, profusely indented with small windows, and flanked on the right and left with towers, each of which was, in its turn, surmounted by four turrets, resembling inverted pepper-boxes. The outhouses, again, including an extensive range of stables, with lofts, sheds, and other appurtenances, formed a square of considerable extent, and were shut out from the dwelling not even by a skreen, of laurels, or a row of com-

mon forest-trees. Yet the bearing of the whole structure was that of a nobleman's or gentleman's seat, where the rites of hospitality were wont to be freely administered; and the conduct of Mr. Blair left no room to doubt that he, at least, had been long accustomed to partake in them.

Having directed Callum where to find a stable, and instructed him to dress the jaded animals and tend them carefully, Blair made a sign to the Parson to follow, and advancing towards a low door in an angle of one of the towers, he applied his hand to the latch and pushed it open. Neil saw by the feeble light which was momentarily admitted, that a narrow passage lay before them, at the extremity of which was the commencement of a winding flight of steps; but he traversed the one and ascended the other in utter darkness; for his guide carefully closed and bolted the door so soon as they were both admitted, and taking the Parson's arm within his own, led him forward without a stumble, as by a route with which he was himself perfectly familiar.

In the mind of a person less initiated into the mysteries of those stirring times, it would have excited surprise, if not suspicion, that there should have been found no one, not even a hound or a watch-dog, about a mansion such as we have just described, ready to give warning of the approach of strangers, even in the dead of night. Parson Neil, however, had seen too much of the proceedings of the party to which he belonged to be at all dismayed by that circumstance. He knew that when men find it necessary to hold conferences, of which their domestics shall entertain no suspicion, the first step which they take is to remove from their establishments every source of alarm, and hence that the very mastiff on whose fidelity his master has long relied as a safeguard, becomes, in such cases, a spy, and is discarded. Not for a moment, therefore, did he fall into the error of imagining that he had been conducted to a deserted castle, for the mere purpose of affording to him a more secure hiding-place. On the contrary, when they had reached a landing-place, not far, as he surmised, from the uppermost story in the house, and his guide, throwing open a door, displayed to him a small chamber, in the centre of which a lamp was burning, he neither expressed nor experienced the slightest astonishment. His feelings, indeed, were manifestly those of a man well satisfied with the preparations made to provide for his accommodation, for he stepped forward at once, and turned round, as if to bid his companion *good-morrow.*

"We have gained many friends since you and I last parted," said Blair in a half-whisper, "and you are now under the roof of one of the most influential among them. Go to bed, however, and refresh yourself. You are an expected and a welcome guest, and in due time shall learn more, both of your own circumstances and of the position of affairs in general."

Neil did not detain him by asking any needless questions, but fully aware that in due time the mystery would be explained, saw him depart without replying. He then threw himself, dressed as he was, upon a bed which stood in a corner of the room, and in five minutes was fast asleep.

The sun was high in the heavens when Neil awoke from that deep slumber, which the fatigue and anxiety that he had undergone during the last four-and-twenty hours rendered peculiarly refreshing. His toilette was soon completed, and he had begun to experience something like the restlessness of curiosity, when a low tap at the door of his chamber announced the approach of a messenger. On his answering the signal, the door opened—Blair again stood before him. "You have rested well, I trust," said he. "This is the third visit that I have paid you, though I could not bring myself to disturb you earlier; yet it is high time that you were stirring. Our little conclave breaks up to-night, and much remains to be settled ere we separate." Neil expressed his regret at having overslept himself, and following his friend, descended one flight of steps, traversed a narrow passage, dimly lighted by means of two loopholes or crevices in the outward wall, and was introduced, through what was evidently a se[redacted] door, into a large saloon or library.

Around a table which stood in the centre of that room six individuals were seated, of whom two only were known to Parson Neil—the one as an active emissary from the Court of St. Germain's, the other as a Jacobite gentleman of considerable influence from Aberdeenshire. The rest were entire strangers, and, with a single exception, men whose appearance was but little calculated to draw towards them any marked attention; for the sole expression visible in their countenances was one approaching to alarm, if not to positive despondency. It was easy indeed for the practised observer to surmise that they were not enthusiasts in the cause which they had espoused, but that, if converts in sincerity, which it was at least possible to doubt, they had been recently, and perhaps not very readily, brought over.

We have spoken of one in that little party as distinguished

by his air and carriage from the rest. He occupied a chair elevated slightly above those of his fellows, and looked around with the bearing of a man accustomed to be treated with respect, to which, indeed, his handsome person, and regular and intelligent features, seemed to imply that he was, both by birth and fortune, entitled. With much to admire, however, both in his manner and expression of countenance, there was something in the glance of his dark and speaking eye which a close observer of the working of human passions could not behold without dislike. Full of fire, full of hardihood—reposing, as it seemed, implicit confidence in those about him—there passed, from time to time, a cloud across his brow, as if he doubted either the sound policy, or, it might be, the practicability of the scheme to which he had lent himself. Such, at least, was the impression which a cursory examination of his countenance excited in the mind of Parson Neil. How far he might be correct, no time was afforded for judging, inasmuch as his companion, leading him forward towards the table, introduced him, in a marked manner, to the object of his scrutiny.

"Permit me, my Lord Kilmarnock," said he, "to make you acquainted with a gentleman, better qualified than perhaps any other in Scotland to satisfy the minds of our friends here respecting the points now under discussion. I consider it a peculiarly happy circumstance that accident should have brought Mr. Macpherson at this particular moment into the vicinity of Callender House."

"Mr. Macpherson is hearty welcome to the hospitality of this house," said Lord Kilmarnock, holding out his hand with great apparent frankness to the Parson, "though it be afforded but scurvily, and under a cloud; and very happy shall I be if he succeed in convincing our excellent friends that there is really greater hazard in continuing their allegiance to the house of Hanover, than in transferring it to the old and rightful dynasty."

"It's no' that I hae ony doubt as to the rights of the case," replied one of the gentlemen, thus addressed, a tall, pale-faced, and demure-looking personage. "Nae doubt, if the Elector had acted up to his professions, and gi'n us the quiet enjoyment of our ain rights and privileges, we would hae been content, for the sake of our religion, whilk he does uphold, to stick by him. And even noo, I am no sure that we will muckle mend ourselves by bringing back King

James, the sworn friend of Prelacy, if he be na the champion o' Popery itself. Still, as I said before, the *jus divinum* I am the last man in the world to deny; only, let me see my way before me, and no rin my head blindfolded against a stane wall."

"And I too," interposed another, "would like to be perfectly assured that the French auxiliaries are no' to settle down in the land; for I hae read enough of history to be acquaint with the dealings of even a few in Mary's time, and I conceit that twenty thousand will no' be mair modest than ten hundred."

"All that's very fine," interposed the third, "but there's mair nae that to be settled. Where's your money, gentlemen? How stand ye in England for supporters and allies? Are the clans moving, and are they united? And, above all, are the terms drawn out and arranged, on which we are to submit to the auld dominion?"

"It is impossible for me to go farther than I have already done," observed the emissary. "I can but repeat, upon my honour as a gentleman, that Louis is prepared to support us with any number of troops that we may require, and that throughout the whole of England our friends are numerous and active, while the enemy are supine and disheartened. Why, my lord, I received letters only yesterday, which assure me that London is ripe for revolt; and that if we don't make haste and mature our plans here in the North, Kent will be up, Essex will be up, and the game played out before Scotland can interfere. As to the manufacturing districts, and the counties of Derby, Lancashire, and Westmoreland, they are already in a state of general commotion."

"But the money, Carsebarren, where's the money to come frae? Will Louis draw his purse-strings as well as lend his soldiers?"

"I can offer no better evidence of that," rejoined the emissary, "than by pledging myself, that there is now on its passage to Scotland a vessel laden with treasure for the use of the loyalists."

"Weel, weel," observed the first speaker, "this may be all true, and I am sure I should be very sorry to doubt it. But when we have brought back the King, will ony man here assure me that our Kirk will stand fast, and that Scotland will escape the curse of a re-established prelacy."

"If you will accept the pledge of an unworthy member of the Episcopal church," interposed the Parson, "as my

ground of belief, I can safely take it upon myself to assert that on the part of the clergy at least, no effort will be made in any way to disturb the existing order of church discipline."

"But the clans, what are they ready to do? Will they come forward in force?"

"Almost to a man," replied the Parson. "When the proper time comes, I engage to show you ten thousand as able and valiant men in arms, as ever quitted the hills."

"And will Carsebarren engage that the French shall be withdrawn as soon as their services cease to be needful?"

"That I will," replied the emissary, "and cheerfully too. Besides, if we succeed in raising a sufficient power among ourselves, we shall require so few foreigners to help us, that we need not greatly trouble ourselves as to their disposition."

"If we can do that," observed the tall and sombre-looking gentleman; "but there's just the difficulty. For my part, I cannot reckon on fifty men out of a' my tenantry and servants; and I am thinking there is not a man here that can count on mair. Besides, I dinna like his lordship's head—it's no canny."

"Now, by my honour, Breadacres," interposed Lord Kilmarnock, "I had not thought you were so superstitious, otherwise I should have been cautious how I repeated before you that silly story. Do you know Mr. Macpherson, that because my old nurse has chanced to see a vision, which vision presented itself in the form of my head rolling into her bed-room, my worthy neighbours here begin to suspect that I shall lose it as a rebel. Lose my head I may; but if I do, I suspect that the forfeit will be paid because I lingered too long in espousing the cause of the stronger party. Never mind my bloody head, Breadacres, but devote all the powers of your own, which is not bloody, to the great cause, in which, by the way, we are all embarked too deeply to retract now."

"That may be yere ain case, my lord," replied the person addressed, "but it's not mine. I have accepted your lordship's invitation mair than ance, and never will deny that I have given the subject my best consideration; but I defy any one to say that I have, either directly or indirectly, promoted or sanctioned an act of ——"

"Of rebellion, you would say, Breadacres," interrupted *Lord Kilmarnock* with a smile. "Why, my very good friend,

who ever accused you of that? We are not rebels—we are loyalists. Rebellion has succeeded for a time; but be it our parts to crush the hydra, even when it appears most secure against injury."

"But in truth, my lord," interposed the Parson, "the hydra, as you term it, was never in feebler plight than at the present moment. Consider, I pray you, the extreme and universal unpopularity of the usurper; the misfortunes which have constantly attended his exertions abroad; the naked state in which he has left these kingdoms by the transportation of his whole army to the Continent; and his profound ignorance that so much as a design has been entertained of disturbing him in his ill-gotten dignities. For my own part, if I have any fear at all, it is lest we lose, in tedious and useless deliberation, an opportunity which may never occur again. Let us strike at once, and there is absolutely nothing to oppose us;—let us continue these discussions a few months longer, and we shall find that we have gained little by delay except the honour of fighting our battle on less advantageous terms."

"By my soul, sir, I agree with you," replied Lord Kilmarnock; "and I am sure that if you can persuade our friends to see matters in their true light, you will do infinite service to them as well as to the cause. There is not a man among them, not even Breadacres himself, that would hesitate to rally round the white flag, were it fairly unfurled; but they cannot perceive that now is the fitting moment to raise that standard."

"With your leave, my lord," interrupted the Aberdeenshire laird, "that moment has not yet come. We must first of all enable our more distant friends to prepare themselves, and the French troops to make good their landing. Like yourself, I lament these delays sincerely, but I should still more lament to see such an enterprise begun till after matters had been so arranged as to ensure us against defeat at the outset. My business here, indeed, is not to urge upon the gentlemen of Stirlingshire the adoption of any immediate resolution, but to ascertain how they stand affected, and with what force they are prepared to succour our powers when we bring them into the field."

"Oh, if that be all," replied Breadacres, drawing a long breath, like one from whose mind an uneasy weight has been removed, "you may safely carry back to our friends across the Tay assurances of our hearty concurrence in *their views*. Have we not all wrongs to complain of? Are we not disgusted, to a man, with the selfish and tyrannical

policy pursued by the usurper? For my part, I am ready, at any given moment, to take the field; and forby a troop of fifty horse, I think that I can show two hundred as stout infantry as ever took the field. But I am for waiting a wee bit longer, just that we may see how things go on the Continent, and whether or no the Prince comes himself to take the lead."

"I thought you could muster only fifty men in all, Breadacres," observed Lord Kilmarnock with a sneer. "Why, man, your strength, like your zeal, appears to grow upon you in exact proportion to the remoteness of a probable opportunity of using them."

"My Lord Kilmarnock," replied Breadacres, warmly, "I am here to give and to receive advice anent a great affair of state, but I entered into no engagement that I should become the butt of your lordship's raillery. My zeal and my strength too may or may not prove equal to yours; but I am still free to dispose of both as I see best.—I think, neighbours, that we had as well retire home."

"We go with you, Breadacres," exclaimed the gentlemen who had from the first exhibited something like distrust of the whole matter. "We came here at your suggestion, and with you we are willing to stand or fall."

All three rose as this was uttered, in evident displeasure, and would have withdrawn, had not Lord Kilmarnock hastened to make amends for the affront which he had somewhat rashly put upon them. He besought them to believe that he never doubted for one moment either their zeal in the good cause, or their ability to serve it; and he reproached Breadacres in particular, with taking up with unnecessary warmth a loose joke of one whom he knew to be his friend. The rest of the party in like manner volunteered their good offices to heal a wound which threatened to prove serious; and to all appearance, at least, the outraged waverers recovered their placidity. But there was a manifest restraint over their future deliberations. Of rising immediately all mention was laid aside, and little more than loose and general hints were thrown out respecting the movements of other adherents. Finally, after spending two or three hours in discussing points of trifling importance at the best, and under existing circumstances almost irrelevant to the business before them, the conclave broke up, and Parson Neil returned to his own apartment.

"This is a most unfortunate termination to a very foolish meeting," observed Mr. Blair, who, with the gentleman from St. Germain's, and his Aberdeenshire friend, accom-

panied the Parson to his chamber. "I augur no benefit from the adhesion of such men as Breadacres and his satellites; who may talk and bluster so long as danger appears remote, but have too deep a stake in the country to run their necks wantonly into a halter. And above all, Lord Kilmarnock appears to me to have totally changed his character. Was ever foolish thing more wantonly said or done than that unlucky jibe—which cut the more keenly because it was felt to be merited?"

"We had no right to look for any wiser proceedings at his hands," replied the Aberdeenshire Jacobite. "A Whig by right of birth, a Presbyterian in creed, and under personal obligations to the Elector, it is no wonder if his wits fail him, now that he has become all at once a loyalist. I cannot abide your wretched converts, and never knew good come of holding intercourse with them."

"Now, by my honour, Gordon," exclaimed the emissary, "you are at least as unguarded in your speech as Lord Kilmarnock. Is it ever too late to renounce our errors? And as to differences of creed, who is to determine whether yours, or mine, or that of our friend Blairlogie be, after all, the soundest?"

"Nay, nay, Carsebarren," interrupted Blair with a placid smile, "never fret because a rattle-brained youngster lashes out at random, like a filly kicking the air. It is true that I also am a convert, and might, if I chose to take example by our redoubtable allies just departed, take this saying to myself. But I have had too much reason to abhor the house of Hanover, to have my purposes diverted by the idle speeches of any one. Besides, I give the speaker credit for meaning no harm—it is the fool's excuse."

"And by my faith I am right glad to plead it," observed Gordon. "I spoke as I often do, without thinking, and therefore without intending harm to any one; but you see the difference when one inadvertently speaks at an honest man and at a knave."

"Well, well, a truce with all this repartee," observed the accredited agent for the exiled family. "It is high time that the Parson were recruiting exhausted nature; for he has a long night's journey before him as well as ourselves."

As he spoke, a confidential domestic appeared to announce that supper was laid out in an adjoining apartment. Thither the confederates repaired, and though not honoured with the presence of the lord of the mansion, they did ample justice to his good cheer. But they did not loiter long over their cups. As soon as night had fairly closed in, they

quitted Callender house by the door which had given ingress to Parson Neil and his guide in the morning; and walking forward to a plantation, found horses awaiting them. They rode together only to the border of the park, when Blairlogie wheeling off in one direction, and Carsebarren in another, the Parson, with Nichol Gordon and Callum, took the road to the north.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As we are neither writing a history, nor seeking
up what is called in modern parlance "an historical
we shall leave Parson Neil to prosecute his tour of i
at his leisure, while we return to matters more int
connected with the real burden of our narrative.

When he once more found himself within the sh
his own apartment, Allan began naturally to revi
occurrences of the night, which were, indeed, so ex
nary in all their bearings, as to give ample employm
to his memory and imagination. To say the truth, h
the events that characterized the first portion of the
passed with singular rapidity through his mind.
membered, indeed, distinctly enough, all that had bef
his gains, his sudden reverses, and the loss, not of
alone, but of character also. Yet these matters appe
the veriest trifles when compared with the extrao
scene in which he had been so recently an actor.
could Hatfield mean? What possible use did he pr
make of one who possessed neither influence nor
either for good or evil? and that he acted from an
than a selfish motive, it was impossible to conceive.
I rich, or great—had I interest at court, or any othe
of aiding a friend at a pinch, then his object would l
ciently manifest; but to make a set at a man like me
friendless, and destitute even of character—truly the
lie under the procedure some secret design, which ti
nothing except time, can render manifest." Such w
speculations, which ended, as it might be supposed th
would, in a conclusion as vague and indeterminate a
selves. "Well, it is quite certain that I can loss

iis connexion. Who knows how much I may gain by
t all events the paction is struck; and circumstanced
n, it were absolute folly not to see the game out. I
sit St. Anthony's Chapel shortly, and get at once to
tom of a mystery, doubtless well worth unravelling."
three or four days, Allan, in obedience to the sug-
is of his new friend, kept carefully within doors. This
our called forth sundry remarks from Callum, who,
med to the nocturnal wanderings of his master, could
nce reconcile himself to the change. But Allan evaded
uiries in which his foster-brother indulged, and the
creature was left to hazard whatever surmises best
d with the humour of the moment. In this manner
passed by, sufficiently trying to the temper and
e of the neophyte; but at the conclusion of that
a letter was brought to Allan, which caused a com-
evolution in his ideas. He became nervous and
d—paced his room backwards and forwards with a
nd troubled step, and watched the gradual departure
as if the hours and minutes were interminable. At
clock struck nine. Allan listened to the deep-toned
to a signal long and anxiously expected; for he im-
ely buckled on his rapier, threw a cloak over his
rs, and warning Callum that there would be no ne-
to sit up, sallied forth.
streets, though swarming with foot-passengers, were
dly dark; for there was no moon in the heavens, and
ury of lamps was then unknown in the Scottish me-
. Here and there, indeed, a lantern or flambeau cast
gleam across the causeway; but, except when these
of late junketing came in the way, or a window sud-
pening caused a stream of light to pierce the gloom,
kness, like that of Egypt, was such as might be

n experienced no regret at the circumstance; keeping
ly in the middle of the way, in order to avoid those
ts, of which the drum had long proclaimed the hour
ng, he moved with a rapid stride along the Cowgate,
ched the West Port just as the turdy warders were
ng to shut up for the night. He congratulated him-
his good fortune in finding the means of egress ac-
, and passed on, without pausing to consider how he
be able to return.
ing the southern face of Holyrood House, Allan soon
that wide and dreary waste, which, though intersect-
and there by stone walls, and destitute of all sylvan

character, passes current by the title of the King's Park. This he traversed, not without an occasional anxious look around him; for the place is lonely, and at the period of which we now write, formed, not unfrequently, the scene of acts of violence. Nevertheless Allan crossed it unmolested, and arriving at the foot of Arthur's Seat—the romantic hill which overhangs the Scottish metropolis from the south-east—he began to ascend.

He had not yet attained to the narrow ledge, or table-land, along which the ruins of Saint Anthony's Chapel stand, when looking towards the sea, he beheld the moon rising in cloudless majesty sheer and abrupt from the very bosom of the waters. A stream of mellow light shot upwards, bringing beautifully into view the Forth—the islands that stud it—the shores of Fife and Lothian, and pouring over the town of Leith, with the elbows of the hills which yet kept Edinburgh in the shade, a gush of silvery lustre. Harassed as his mind was, Allan could not resist the natural impulse which induced him to stand still, and look abroad upon the panorama. He felt elevated, in spite of himself, above the cares and concerns of the present. His imagination, at all times vivid, was roused, and a feeling not far removed from adoration stole over him, though its object was rather Nature than Nature's God. But the business which led him forth at so unseasonable an hour was too engrossing to be kept long in the background; he soon withdrew both his gaze and his thoughts from the glorious scenery around him, and pressed forward, with an uneasy step, towards the ruin.

Overhung by the projecting face of a precipice, and cut off from the course of the moon's rays, the old Chapel lay at this time completely in the shade, its mouldering walls looming like dark shadows against the side of a corrie of loose stones. A small rill, which, after collecting into a little fountain ran onwards through the pebbles, produced a ceaseless but most musical murmur; and as it leaped across the ridge, along the summit of which the moonbeams played, glanced like a stream of quicksilver in its course. Allan observed these striking features, and it cannot be said that he gazed upon them with an eye wholly vacant. Yet his mind, if it received the impression at all, retained it scarcely for a moment; for he passed on, and was soon at the spot described to him by Hatfield.

Having taken his station under the shadow of a buttress, whence the objects around were in some degree discernible, though he himself remained entirely concealed, Allan gun

the preconcerted signal, by whistling, in a tone, low indeed, yet sufficiently clear to be heard at some distance. No answer was given; and though he listened attentively for some time, all was silent. He whistled again, and the same result ensued—neither voice nor whistle replied to the shrill note which rang, this time, through the rocks overhead. "Am I deceived?" said Allan, involuntarily speaking aloud; —"Does he mock me? Yet why should I suspect that? Has he aught to gain?—have I any thing to lose? No! I must have patience." As he pronounced these words the clock of St. Giles's struck, and ere its last knell was tolled the others took up the sound. Allan breathed again freely. He had been premature. The trysting hour was only now come. He would permit a few minutes to elapse ere he again gave the signal. He did so, and the consequences were as prompt and explicit as the most impatient of human beings could have desired. His note was answered, though in a tone considerably more subdued than that which he had himself uttered; and Hatfield, as if he had risen from beneath the earth, stood before him.

"Well met," said the new comer in a half whisper, "and punctually too. You are true to your time and place; I trust I have not been behindhand with you, and that you have not been kept waiting."

"I was somewhat before my time," replied Allan, instinctively copying the tone in which he was addressed, "and with you rests the merit of punctuality. The clocks have just struck ten, and you are exact as the shadow of the dial to the moment."

"Well, it matters little which of us arrive first, so long as we meet for some purpose. I come at your desire, to serve you as I best can; what would you?—what is it that you want?"

"That which I am ashamed to solicit from one who has already laid me under so many and such serious obligations. I stand in need of assistance in every way—for—the accomplishment of—of—of an object purely selfish."

"And why not, my good friend?" replied Hatfield, gaily; "was it not laid down as a rule of faith when we last parted, that the desire of serving ourselves is, after all, the great actuating principle in life? Why should you be ashamed to acknowledge that which I—which all men who speak the truth, avow freely?"

"It may be as you say," answered Allan, "yet mine is a case *so perfectly* unworthy, that in truth I know not in *what terms to enter* upon it. You will despise me altogether *when I tell* you how I am situated."

"I do not believe that I shall," replied Hatfield; "because, whatever your immediate desires may be, I give you credit for loftier principles in the back-ground, and a disposition to play a part in the great game of public life. But say, how can I assist you?"

"I am in want of money—of such a sum as shall enable me to perform a long journey—to engage the services of half a dozen agents, and to secure for a season, from the hazard of pursuit, both myself and others. Can you aid me in this strait?"

"Unquestionably I can; that is to say, I believe that I can, provided you, in your turn, undertake to perform for me such service as I shall require. Are you willing to give and take—to confer a benefit as well as to receive one?—in plain language, to earn what you ask as a loan?"

"You have but to name your conditions, and if they be such as my father's son can perform, you may rely upon my fulfilling them to the letter."

"If—I must have no ifs," replied Hatfield with a sneer. "Do you remember our hurried conversation in the High-street—my demands and your acknowledgments?"

"Perfectly!" cried Allan.

"Then I take it for granted that your father's son is not over-scrupulous as to the matters in which it may be lawful for him to engage. If my memory serve me right, the slaughter of his nearest and dearest relative was pronounced allowable, provided some good end were thereby to be obtained for the slayer."

"I did not understand that in a literal sense," replied Allan; "I took it for granted that no more was meant, than to express strongly the absolute freedom of one's mind from the restraints of custom. I confess that I am not prepared to dip my hands wantonly in human blood at all—certainly not in the blood of my nearest of kin."

"Who ever intended that you should?" replied Hatfield with a laugh; "what possible benefit could result to me or to any one, were you to assassinate your mother, your uncle, your cousin, or——"

"How came you to know that I had a cousin?" demanded Allan, eagerly.

"Pooh, pooh! is that all?" replied Hatfield; "why, man, there is not a circumstance connected with you that I don't know. I am aware of your father's influence in his own clan, and among his neighbours. I know how readily you may fill his place, and that if you have hitherto failed to do so, the fault is your own. I know that your uncle's

authority is great, and that were he more bold and less crafty than he is, it might be still greater. I have heard also of his daughter, and of a certain attachment entertained for her by one, whom I would fain make my friend. Am I not correct?—tell me."

Allan started, for he had not anticipated any such exposition of the state of his own and of his family's affairs. "In the name of fortune," demanded he, "whence have you your information? I thought you had been a stranger in Scotland, yet you seem to know the conditions of individuals, little distinguished beyond the bounds of their own fastnesses! What is the meaning of all this?"

"Nothing—nothing whatever!" replied Hatfield; "I merely stated facts in order to show you, that there is less necessity for reserve in our intercourse, than might appear. And now for the matter before us. You want money; perhaps, too, you want a place of shelter for yourself and your prize?"

"I do," replied Allan; "I want both."

"And you are ready to assist to the utmost of your power, any friend who will place these conveniences within your reach?"

"With my life, if it be demanded—with all my energies of mind and body."

"Now then listen to me. You have been scurvily treated by those who ought to have dealt very differently with you. You have lost your station in society, both here and elsewhere. You cannot show your face in Edinburgh—you scarcely dare to show it at home. All men hate you, most men despise you,—and to women, but especially to her on whom your own affections are fixed, you are an object of abhorrence. What tie connects you with your native country and your kindred? There is none. You seek now only one gratification—I know not what it is, but I can guess;—why not go farther? Revenge is not less sweet than love. Why not unite them? I am aware how little you have merited this scurvy treatment at the hands of your relatives. You never did them wrong; but their views point beyond you, and hence their hostility. Can you submit to all this patiently?"

"Only tell me how I am to do otherwise, and then direct me as you will," muttered Allan, choking with rage; of which, perhaps, the individual who reminded him of his wrongs was scarcely less an object than those who inflicted them.

"*Nothing* can be easier," replied Hatfield. "Nay [illegible]

if you play your cards well, and we know that you can if you will, your interests, not less than your revenge, may be promoted. What say you? Art willing to throw for a large stake—such as shall place you in affluence all your days—besides wiping out for ever the trace of past errors? There never was a time like the present."

"Speak plainly and to the point!" cried Allan impatiently: "I am no Œdipus to read riddles; and if I were, I am in no mood to exercise my talent now: speak plainly."

"You want money," observed Hatfield, turning off abruptly from the subject, "and for a pressing occasion, I think. When will it be required?"

"Now, or to-morrow morning at the latest. I must be far from Edinburgh ere the sun set again, and I have not a shilling with which to supply the necessities of the road."

"This is short notice, but I will do what I can," replied Hatfield; "yet I tell you frankly, that I am not my own master. I think that I can procure the money, though I have it not of my own, from those who will give that and much more, provided you assist them in return. And when I add, that by so doing, your own views will be most effectually forwarded, perhaps there will be little need to go farther. Do you understand me?"

"To a certain degree unquestionably; altogether I do not. Whom am I to serve, and in what way to serve them?"

"Look you, Mac Diarmid," said Hatfield, laying his elbow on Allan's shoulder, and applying his lips almost to the ear of his companion, "we live in troublesome times. The country is in a strange state, and strange plots are in progress. Don't you think that the man who could in any way contribute to nip rebellion in the bud—in other words, to avert from his native land the horrors of civil war, would deserve well both from his contemporaries and from posterity?"

"Perhaps he might," replied Allan; "but I am still at a loss to gather how the question bears upon my particular case."

"Why thus, to be sure. The best and readiest method of hindering the success of an insurrection, is to check it ere it come to a head. This, again, is to be done only by giving timely notice of such intrigues as are in progress; and from the trustiest agents alone can such information be received truly. Men like yourself, for example, whose family propensities are well known, can at all times dive into the secret proceedings of conspirators; and if, like you, they have sustained personal wrong where they had a right

to look for kindness, I cannot imagine an occupation more agreeable than to counterwork projects in themselves so noxious. Do you follow me?"

"I think I do," replied Allan deliberately; "you want me to turn spy—is not that your object?"

"Spy! no, not exactly a spy. That is a term which no man likes to find coupled with his own name, and there is no necessity to couple it with yours. I would willingly see you take service under the Government so as to crush a growing evil ere it attain its height; but I do not ask you to become a spy."

"Be so good, then, as say what you desire," replied Allan. "For my part I have no particular objection to any species of employment, so long as it does not quite render one contemptible in one's own eyes and odious to others; and for aught I know to the contrary, the business of a spy may be a very reputable one."

"Almost as much so, certainly," observed Hatfield, coolly, "as that of a thorough-paced black-leg. But we are wandering from our subject. A spy, I take it, is a man who insinuates himself into the confidence of a party which is pursuing an honourable course, for the purpose of betraying them to their enemies. Or a spy is one who entices, it may be, some conspirators onwards, with the view of deriving benefit from their conviction. But he is not a spy who merely receives such intelligence as is thrust on him, and lays it before the Government immediately. There is all the difference in the world between preventing and nourishing a plot. The most high-minded man will do the former, if he can; and to do it effectually will not scruple to reveal the secrets of the plotters. Indeed there is mercy in this, because it saves many lives and much suffering. But your spy conceals facts till the plot is ripe, and then discloses them for the sheer purpose of fattening on the slaughter of friends and foes. Am I intelligible?"

"Perfectly so," replied Allan; "you are anxious that I should make myself master of the designs of my countrymen, and of the schemes which they are devising in order to accomplish their designs; and then, that I should reveal both schemes and plans to the existing Government."

"It is even so. You have placed the matter in its proper point of view, only that you have omitted to add, that he who performs this office efficiently, will prove a benefactor not only to the Government, but to its enemies. Look to the true state of the case. None but the wildest enthusiasts *can dream of restoring* the exiled family to the throne of

these kingdoms. It is madness to attempt it, and the attempt can lead only to general confusion and alarm for a time—in the end, to the total destruction of such as engage in it. Were it not an act of mercy to render the movement impracticable—of mercy even to the Jacobites themselves?"

"I have heard you out, Hatfield," replied Allan, calmly, "and you yourself must allow that I have listened to you patiently. Now hear me. Disguise your proposal as you may, it is one which would be insulting to any man of honour, and which no man of honour would think of making. But that is of no consequence between us. I am ruined; you are—I know not what—probably as destitute of character, certainly as wanting in integrity, as I am myself. I therefore tell you plainly, that with my eyes open to the enormity of the offence—with a firm consciousness that I disgrace myself beyond the possibility of retrieval, I close with your offer. What is character, or station, or principle to me? I have lost them all, and the loss of them I owe partly to nature, partly to those from whom I had a right to look for other treatment. Since I cannot recover what is lost, I may seek some new road to enjoyment. I am yours on your own terms. Supply me only with funds for my present expedition, and give me time to accomplish it,—then do with me what you will."

"Spoken like yourself," said Hatfield, in a tone of mingled irony and frankness. "A free and undisguised acknowledgment of what you and I need not affect to hide from one another. For, after all, what is character? Can you live upon it? Will it fill your belly, or satisfy any other want? Or, as honest Jack Falstaff would say—'Can character set to a leg or an arm, or take away the grief of a wound? What is character? a word. What is in that word? character. What is that character? air.' Pshaw—let moon-struck idiots grasp at the shadow—we will have the substance. Wine, women, play—food, raiment, the society of honest fellows like ourselves—these are the good things we covet, and they are all within our reach. You shall have any sum of money that you may require by an early hour in the morning. Will the arrangement suit you?"

"Perfectly," replied Allan; "and what security will be required from me; or rather, how am I to proceed with my part of the contract?"

"We want no security which we do not possess already," replied Hatfield; "and as to other matters, they will be explained in due time. Settle your own little affair in the

first place, and then come to me for farther instructions. And now, good night!"

The friends, if they may be so termed, here shook hands, and while Hatfield remained stationary beside the ruin, Allan retraced his steps towards the city. A trifling bribe sufficed to corrupt the fidelity of the "waiters," and he regained his lodgings without farther accident.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHETHER it was the effect of his late walk in the country, or the consequence of those habits of compulsory sobriety which he had latterly contracted, or that a load of care was removed from his mind, or that a consummation of evil like the passage of every crisis, brings the stupor of indifference in its train; whether all, or any of these causes contributed to produce the effect, we know not; but it is certain that Allan slept that night unusually sound, and that he did not awake till a late hour on the following morning. His slumbers, indeed, were so profound, that Callum, surprised at their continuance, had more than once looked in, on purpose to satisfy himself that all was right; and on each occasion withdrew only half assured that a man might not, after all, be dead, though he breathed audibly. At length, however, Allan rose, and hastily dressing himself, demanded to be informed whether any letter or parcel had been left for him. He was answered in the affirmative. A caudy or common porter had brought a sealed packet, which did not, as he was given to understand, require an answer; and the packet itself was now put into Allan's hands by his valet. Allan desired to be alone; and then with a shaking hand broke the seal. The contents were not different from what he expected to find them. There was a letter from Hatfield, exhorting him to zeal and diligence, and desiring to see him at the old trysting place, so soon as he should return. But that which best suited the present state of Allan's affairs, was a bill of exchange for fifty pounds, endorsed in Hatfield's hand and negotiable. To convert it into money, and to hire post-horses, was the work [redacted] an hour; and Allan was soon afterwards proceed[redacted]nd trot, on the road which led to Glasgow.

While these [redacted] were passing in Edinburgh, Mrs. Mac D[redacted]edge which she had given

directed all the energies of her mind to the single object of securing the accomplishment of her son's wishes. Of her interview with old Elspeth the reader is already aware, as well as of the manner in which it terminated. The lady was not remiss in keeping her second appointment. At an early hour in the morning which succeeded the first interview she was again at the shieling, where a fresh actor on the stage of treachery and violence had arrived before her.

On entering the hovel, Mrs. Mac Diarmid beheld, in addition to her nurse, a man seated beside the fire, who rose and saluted her, awkwardly perhaps, but, as it seemed, not without becoming deference. He was above the middle size, remarkably robust, though unshapely and gaunt. His limbs were very long; his hands, indeed, reached to his knees, and both they and his feet were enormously large. A shaggy crop of red hair surmounting a forehead low and narrow, from beneath which, deeply sunk in their sockets, peered out a pair of small gray eyes—high-cheek bones—what is called a trumpet nose—and a complexion totally overwhelmed by freckles, gave to him altogether a striking, because an almost unearthly appearance. His costume, again, was simply the plaid, which, though it protected his body, left neck, arms, and legs bare; and on his feet he wore a sort of sandal, fabricated out of the untanned hide of the deer. Nor were other adjuncts wanting to complete the full-length picture of a highland outlaw. A dirk, or long knife, was stuck in a waist-belt, made, like his brogues, of undressed deer-skin; a gun rested upon a settle near him, as if it were seldom permitted to pass beyond the reach of his grasp. Mrs. Mac Diarmid started as her eyes fell upon this strange figure. Nearly twenty years had elapsed since she last beheld her foster-brother, and he was then a stripling, awkward perhaps, but far from savage in his appearance. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, if she experienced something like dismay, when Elspeth, made aware of her presence, reintroduced to her the companion of her childhood.

"He's here, my lady," said the old woman, laying her hand upon her son's back and pushing him forward: "Ranald is here to do your bidding, even unto death. You have but to lay your commands upon him, and he will obey, let what will abide."

"I heartily thank you both," said Mrs. Mac Diarmid, placing, according to the custom of the country, her hand within the bony paw of Ranald; "and I am sure that I could

not give my confidence to any persons less likely to betray it. Have you spoken to Ranald of the strait in which I am, Elspeth; or must I, myself, be at once informant and petitioner?"

"Sit down, sit down, honey dear," exclaimed the old woman; "and you, Ranald, fetch a stool for the lady. There now, there now—we shall do very well. And now, my dear bairn, say what ye want, and I pledge my life that if it can be done, it shall be done."

"As to that," replied Mrs. Mac Diarmid, "I have nothing to add to what I told you yesterday. The enterprise may be hazardous; the difficulties with which it is surrounded may be great; but if it fail, there is no peace on earth for me, mother; no, nor in the grave either."

"Ye hear that, Ranald," said the old woman, turning her dim eyes upon her son. "She cannot rest either upon the earth or under it, till the thing be done. You would not hesitate to die for her, and you must not scruple to undertake this service also."

"She'll do what she can," replied Ranald; "but she canna do mair. Hemish wad hae gane far to see her leddyship sorted, but Hemish is no here."

"What matters that now, Ranald?" replied his mother; "Hemish is at rest, and the leddy, at least, is no answerable for it. Ye must na' think o' the past."

"She's no thinking o' what's past, she's thinking what's to come; and how an oath sworn under the gallows tree is ever to be got ower. But may be the leddy can tell that, if ye canna yoursel, mother."

"Will money purchase a forgetfulness of that oath?" demanded Mrs. Mac Diarmid. "If so, name your price."

"Money's good in its way," replied the outlaw, "and Red Ranald's no the man to despise it. But blood weighs heavier than gold itself."

"The tie of kindred then," continued the lady. "Remember, Ranald, that the same bosom suckled us, the same arms tended us. We are bound together by a chain which neither time nor eternity can sever. Will that consideration have weight with you?"

"I was bound to Hemish by the same chain, only it might be stronger. But Hemish is dead noo, and wha kilt him?"

"Then let your mother's wishes—your mother's commands sway you. Speak to him, Elspeth: tell him that he is bound to obey you at least, since he refuses to gratify me."

"My mother may do with me what she likes, but she'll no bid me help the son of the man that robbed her of her first-born."

"But I do bid you serve, my ain bairn, should your heart's blood be the price. Ranald, it is I, not Glenarroch's widow, that charge you, by all a mother's fondness, by all that she has suffered for your sake, by all your own dutiful attention to her—and dutiful and kind you have ever been—devote yourself to the accomplishment of this single enterprise, and then be free for ever. Will you be guided this once?"

"By you, mother, not now only, but always. What am I to do?"

Having thus brought the outlaw to the desired point, Mrs. Mac Diarmid proceeded to explain to him just so much of Allan's position, as to render him capable of forming a judgment respecting his powers and opportunities of bettering it. Ranald, though ferocious in his aspect, was crafty and cool. He expressed himself willing to aid in the abduction of the girl, and possessed of the necessary instruments, provided only a fitting opportunity should offer; but he positively refused to embark in any business of the kind immediately. He had other matters on hand, which must, first of all, be disposed of, and months might elapse ere he should be able to call his associates together. But if the lady would exercise patience, and wait the fitting moment, he would undertake to place Marcelly in Allan's hands, when he might do with her what he liked. It was to no purpose that Mrs. Mac Diarmid urged upon him the necessity of accomplishing his object immediately. He was deaf to all arguments having a tendency to derange the course which he had chalked out; and she, seeing that remonstrance would be useless, was forced to yield. The utmost, indeed, that she could extract from him was an assurance that he would not unnecessarily protract the day of trial; and that, as soon as all things were ripe for action, she should hear from him.

In consequence of the dogged determination of Ranald to move only when it suited his own convenience, several months elapsed without enabling Mrs. Mac Diarmid to communicate to her son any intelligence of importance. Mean while, his letters were all written in the same strain of deep dejection, of bitter hostility to his fellow-men, occasionally of remorse and self-upbraiding, though far more frequently of complaint; yet it was not till the winter had well nigh run its course, that he ever directly recurred to their parting interview. Then, indeed, the delicacy with which his allu-

sions to Marcelly had hitherto been marked, began to diminish. He spoke of her in plain terms; repeated his declarations that the burden of life would be insupportable without her; and, at last, claimed a redemption of the pledge which Mrs. Mac Diarmid had somewhat rashly given. Nor was this all. In proportion as she seemed to evade or postpone the accomplishment of her promise, his language became more and more that of a desperate man; till something not far removed from upbraiding was heaped upon herself.

Mrs. Mac Diarmid bore this with considerable difficulty, and more than once called upon Elspeth to explain whence the delays on the part of her son had arisen. But she met with no agreeable reception. The old woman became fretful, uneasy, sometimes bordering upon uncivil, and failed not, on any occasion, to make the inquirer aware, that over Ranald's actions she possessed no control. At last, however, a change "came over the spirit" of their existence. Mrs. Mac Diarmid was met one evening during a solitary ramble by a stranger encircled in a plaid, and after devoting ten minutes to a confidential conversation with him, she returned home an altered woman.

All this while the intercourse between the two houses of Glenarroch and Ardmore had been frequent. In spite of the painful conference which she had held with her aunt, Marcelly was too gentle and too affectionate to shun her society, while Ardmore himself felt interested, on various accounts, in keeping well with the widow of Norman Mac Diarmid. So soon, therefore, as the embarrassment naturally occasioned by the appeal to her feelings had worn off, Marcelly became again a frequent visiter at Glenarroch; and even Fergus, seeing that his sister-in-law could not be brought to remove to Ardmore, spent there occasional portions of his time. Nor was the intercourse between the two families restricted to formal visits. Scarce a day passed, some portion of which Marcelly failed to spend in the company of her aunt, who, though occasionally absent, and as it appeared to Marcelly, capricious, was, in the main, kind and hospitable as she had ever been.

It was on a soft mild winter's evening, when the sun, which had been out all day, shed a rich glow, at setting, over sea and mountain, that Marcelly, who had spent the morning with her aunt, proposed to return to Ardmore. Mrs. Mac Diarmid was, however, pressing, and the girl, accustomed to traverse her native wilds at all hours in security, agreed to remain an hour or two longer, more especially as the moon, which was then approaching her third

quarter, would rise and give ample light, by nine or ten o'clock. Not at any time, or under any circumstance, would she have experienced reluctance in obliging her relative; for of all living creatures, Marcelly Mac Diarmid was the one who most steadily preferred the gratification of others to her own. But on the present occasion she saw, or fancied that she saw, more than an ordinary ground of yielding. Mrs. Mac Diarmid was manifestly unhappy. She conversed, indeed, but it was hurriedly and at random; and from time to time she would drop into a species of reverie, from which her niece found considerable difficulty in rousing her. Marcelly kindly questioned her as to her health, but she declared that it was not different from what it usually was. In like manner she denied that she had received painful intelligence either from Edinburgh or elsewhere, till in the end, Marcelly ceased to ask questions, and learned to deal with her relative after the fashion which she herself set. Such was the frame of mind in which these two persons passed the day, and the hours of night which they spent together brought little variety in their mode of acting and thinking.

It might be about half-past nine when Marcelly, protesting that she had overstaid her time, rose to depart. She had come totally unattended, and her father, either presuming that she would remain all night at Glenarroch, or trusting to the profound tranquillity which prevailed in the strath, had not, it appeared, sent any escort to conduct her home. Nevertheless, Mrs. Mac Diarmid scarcely hinted at the impropriety of her quitting the shelter of the roof that covered her. Something indeed was said, but it was loose, general, and indistinct; nor when parried, even carelessly, and in the tone which indicates a desire not to hold out, was it repeated. Marcelly therefore rose, and put on her cloak and bonnet. But her aunt, though she abstained from pressing a sojourn for the night, volunteered to see her at least part of the way home, and Marcelly with great good-humour accepted the convoy, though wholly free from the most remote anticipation of peril. They set out, therefore, arm-in-arm, as soon as both were equipped, and walked on lovingly, and, as it seemed, in perfect confidence one towards the other.

For a brief space their conversation was light, general, and pleasant; such as beseemed the relation in which they stood towards each other, and the nature of their habits and acquirements. By degrees, however, Mrs. Mac Diarmid became more and more reserved, till in the end she ceased

to be other than a listener. It was to no purpose that Marcelly exercised her ingenuity by changing the topics of their discourse, and striving to interest her fancy. Her answers, which at first came readily enough, grew by degrees less and less apposite, till in the end they were either not delivered at all, or fell absolutely at random. Marcelly became weary of taking the lead, where the desire to follow appeared so very equivocal. She, therefore, gradually ceased to exert herself, and they continued their walk silent and moody.

They were approaching the long flat rock on which Mrs. Mac Diarmid had first disclosed to Marcelly her knowledge of Allan's wishes, when the moon suddenly emerging from beneath a broad black cloud, shed a sudden stream of light over surrounding objects. Marcelly looked towards the loch, across which a flood of silvery lustre poured, exquisitely ruffled by the rise and fall of the slender waves that rolled onwards with the flow of the tide in a perfectly calm night. Mrs. Mac Diarmid's eyes followed, or seemed to follow those of her niece; till the image of the rock appeared suddenly to arrest her attention, and to bring back a vivid recollection of all which had passed during that harrowing interview.

"We are near the spot, Marcelly," said she somewhat abruptly, "where I first became a suitor to you on my own and Allan's behalf. Fain, fain would I renew that suit; for, indeed, my love, the convictions that operated so powerfully, then, have not to this hour lost aught of their strength. Why is it, Marcelly, that you reject his suit? why will you persist in rendering miserable those who love you, as we do?—one who has so many claims upon your regard as I have?"

"Dearest aunt," replied Marcelly earnestly, "I did hope that this subject would never be renewed. Painful, most painful to me is the reflection, that I have been reduced to the necessity of rejecting, even once, a proposal advanced by you; and I had flattered myself that I should not a second time be exposed to so great a mortification. But on this point I must incur the blame of obstinacy, if indeed you will persist in blaming me for that over which I have no control."

"But why, my love—why continue obstinate? You assigned no reason for your determination; and I am sure that you are too just and too sensible ever to act without reason. Why may not Allan hope at some period, no matter how remote, to claim you as his bride?"

"Do not ask me, my dear, dear aunt; for, indeed, I would not give to you one moment's pain, if I could avoid it. It is enough, that I cannot love your son—that I never shall love him. As a sister, as a friend, I am willing to think of him; and Heaven knows, by none will the hour be more heartily welcomed which sends him back to take that place amongst us which he ought to fill. But beyond this, I have told you, I have told himself, that I cannot go; and I entreat that you will never press me farther on the subject."

"All this may be true, child," replied Mrs. Mac Diarmid; "and I believe it to be quite natural; but surely you are not so wise in your own conceit as to reject the lessons of experience. Believe me, and I am a competent judge in the case, that this fine-flown sentiment of love and so forth, is the merest child's play and nonsense. There is not a woman living, from fifteen to fifty, that has not been visited by it in her day; but in what does it invariably end? Either in bitter disappointment, when the object of the fancy is found to fall short of the standard by which we had tried him, or in the total shipwreck of peace and quiet, if the opportunity of proving this truth, in all cases a luckless one, be denied. No, no, Marcelly! Take the advice of one who counsels according to the dictates of experience, and wed your *friend*, not your *lover*. The one will infallibly rise in your estimation after he becomes your own; the other will as surely give you cause to say, that your imagination misled you."

"I am not prepared to give an opinion on a point which I have never considered," replied Marcelly with affected gaiety. "But I doubt not you are perfectly right, and I promise not to lay your counsel out of view when I come to consider the important question of my own settlement."

"Then look to it now, Marcelly. Nay, do not trifle with me, for in truth it is not a subject of trifling with either of us; but be serious, and look to the facts as they stand. You say that you love Allan as a brother, as a friend?"

"I said that I *should* do so," replied Marcelly, coldly, "whenever he returned to us such as we hope to find him."

"Do you not regard him *now* as a brother and a friend? What! are all your childish hours forgotten? Are the years which you spent together under his father's roof, remembered no more? Is it possible, Marcelly? I will not believe it, except I receive the declaration from your own lips."

"*And from my lips*, dear madam, you shall never receive

any such declaration. Those years are not forgotten—they never can be; but—but—but—Allan is not what he was then; and, until he becomes himself again, you cannot expect that his friends should feel for him as they used to do."

"And when he does become what he once was, will you love him then, Marcelly?"

"As a sister, certainly;—as any thing more than a sister—pardon me, my dear aunt, but I must speak plainly—never!"

"Then God's will be done!" exclaimed Mrs. Mac Diarmid in an elevated tone.

She had scarcely uttered these words when a small boat suddenly shot from behind a promontory hard by, and ran into a little bay just beneath the point of road which they were crossing. The ladies stopped short, surprised, if not alarmed, by an apparition so unexpected; and their astonishment was not diminished, when two out of the four persons by whom the skiff was manned, suddenly quitted their stations and leaped on shore. A hurried glance served to convince Marcelly that the strangers were disguised. They wore a species of vizor over their faces; and she beheld with indescribable dismay that they made directly towards herself. Instinctively she clung to her aunt, who trembled not less violently than she. But no time was granted for the interchange of ideas. The men sprang upon them, and grasping each a prize, hurried them to the beach. "Help! help!" cried Marcelly wildly, but she cried in vain. A giant's strength overpowered her; she was carried like an infant on board the boat, and her head and person being enveloped in a cloak, she was laid down, though with considerable tenderness, in the stern sheets. In a moment, the skiff shot from the shore, and was soon far away and in mid channel.

CHAPTER XX.

For some time Marcelly remained where the seaman had placed her, incapable of making the slightest exertion. Her faculties, indeed, gave way under the suddenness of the shock; for though consciousness never wholly deserted her, the power to speak, to move—we had almost said to think—was entirely suspended. Nor, to say the truth, when reflection began to return, was she mistress all at once of her own energies. The ceaseless ripple of the water, and the regular, though quick splashing of the oars, warned her that she was already far beyond the reach of aid; and the reflection that she was so, removed every inclination to provoke farther hostility by useless remonstrance. She lay, therefore, immoveable in the bottom of the boat, not daring so much as to cast aside the fold of the mantle which hindered her from looking around.

During several hours—it was impossible for her to guess how many—the little vessel continued its voyage, the rowers maintaining all the while a profound silence. There seemed to be no need of a "master spirit," or rather of a master's tongue, to direct its course; for it held on steadily, and, as it appeared to Marcelly, in the direction of the main ocean. She was led to this conclusion by perceiving that the boat became more and more agitated as the night wore on—as if she were gradually advancing into rougher water, and as a necessary consequence into a wider sea. But even this apprehension, and it was a terrible one, did not induce her to sit up. Once indeed, and once only, she made a movement with that view, and had actually raised herself upon her elbow; but a hand laid heavily upon her shoulder warned her that she was going too far, and she instantly abandoned her design. She lay down again in the bottom of the boat, scarce venturing to breathe.

In this manner the little vessel continued to move

throughout a greater portion of the night. By and by, Marcelly was able to ascertain that a sail was hoisted; and the heeling of the skiff gave notice that a breeze upon her quarter sent her merrily along. But it was evident enough that they were not destined, at least in so frail a bark, to run the hazard of a deep-sea passage. The sail was taken in, but the oars were not resumed. Then rose a cry from the helmsman, the first which he had as yet uttered, warning his comrades to fend off the bow from some opposing substance; and last of all a shock, as if the boat had struck. "Make fast!" exclaimed the steersman, in a hoarse voice. His order was obeyed, and the boat lay at moorings, while the crew, one after another, leaped on shore.

Wondering what was next to follow, yet too much alarmed to quit her recumbent posture, Marcelly continued, for perhaps a minute and a half, as the rough hand of the seaman had placed her, in total ignorance whether she was still guarded, or that her companions or escort, whichever they might be, had abandoned her. Not long, however, was that doubt, as to the nature of her position, permitted to overshadow her mind. "You must rise," said a voice, with which, though disguised, she could not but suspect that she was acquainted. "No harm is meant you, no injury shall be done you; only you must not presume to offer either the slightest resistance, or to remove the covering from your eyes." Marcelly, of course, submitted quietly to her fate; and being lifted by a couple of men, she became aware that she was conveyed to dry land.

From the unsteady movements of those who carried her, it was evident enough that the landing-place was rough and uneven. They passed, however, without any accident, beyond it, and Marcelly soon became aware that she was conveyed under the portal of some building, which the echo of their footsteps assured her was at once extensive and desolate. A cold, damp air, moreover, struck to her vitals, in spite of the thick mantle in which she was enveloped, while the sudden cessation of noise in the tread of her bearers indicated that they were passing over grass, or some other soft substance. By and by, a door creaked on its hinges, and a glow of heat, as well as a stream of light, warned her that she was, at length, in the interior of some apartment. "Stir not, for your life!" said a voice, though not the same to which she had previously listened, "till you are permitted to do so." She was then seated upon a bench, and for a space of time—brief, doubtless, in itself, but to her insupportably tedious—she continued motionless and silent.

Marcelly heard a door slam to when her bearers quitted her, though she necessarily remained in ignorance whether or not she was alone. By and by, however, the sound of hinges grating struck upon her ear, and she was required, in a female voice, to rise and cast back the covering from her face. She obeyed the command, and found herself in a small, vaulted chamber, rudely furnished with a couple of stools, a truckle-bedstead, and a pitcher of water; and at once lighted and warmed by a fire of wood, that blazed and crackled in a chimney destitute of a grate. She saw, too, that her companion was a rough masculine-looking woman of the middle age, short and stout, with an expression of countenance peculiarly forbidding, and a profusion of coarse light brown hair, that streamed from beneath a dirty mob-cap. Generally speaking, the sight of a female face conveys something like an assurance of protection in danger,—at least, women are apt to augur well for themselves, when thrown into perilous situations, if they find that persons of their own sex are not shut out from them. But, on the present occasion, it cannot be said that any such effect was produced. Marcelly turned away from her companion with a shudder, and clasping her hands together in agony, gave herself up as utterly undone.

"What's the matter wi' ye?" demanded the beldam, with a glance of ineffable scorn. "Ye need na cleek your hands that gate, and look as if ye couldna help it. There's naebody gaen to eat ye, I trow."

Though little encouraged by the tenor of this address, Marcelly felt as if she were bound to take some notice of it, and therefore, in a subdued and diffident tone, ventured to ask where she was, and for what purpose she had been brought thither.

"It disna' muckle matter where ye are, my jo," was the surly answer: "and as to what's wanted wi' ye—I dare say ye'll ken that in good time. Ise warrant ye're nae better than Jean Kay ony gate; and she did unco weel in the lang run."

"But I pray you, tell me why this outrage has been committed. I am not aware that I ever wronged any one—I do not know that any human being owes me a grudge; why then am I thus rudely torn from my home, and carried I know not where?"

"That's nae business o' mine," replied her companion. "May be I ken naething about it, and may be I do; but Ise *warrant ye'll hear nae mair frae me than ye do hear.*"

"And my aunt, what have they done with her? She is not here—surely they have not murdered her?"

"Oo, deil a fear o' that," answered the woman, with a devilish laugh. "They're no just gi'en to murdering; though, trowth, I ken naething about your anty—nor even that ye hae ane. Hoosever, there's yer bed gin yere sleepy, and here I am to dress ye some supper if ye feel disposed to eat it."

"No, thank you," replied Marcelly; "I would willingly sleep if I could; and if I cannot, at least I would not hinder you from doing so. Pray leave me whenever you feel disposed; only be within call, for you are a woman, and ——"

"How clever she is!" interrupted the hag. "Hoosomever, I'm no' gaen to leave you yet. Lie down and sleep your fill; but whether ye sleep or wake, yese hae the full benefit of my company. This chaumer belongs to baith of us, and we maunna fall oot, ye see. Whan will it be your pleasure to gang to yer bed?"

Marcelly looked at her with a beseeching eye, but saw in that rugged countenance no touch of pity. She therefore declined making any answer; and throwing herself upon the couch, closed her eyes and affected to sleep.

She might have lain in this attitude the better part of an hour, her companion occupying a stool by the fire-side, and humming a low monotonous air all the while, when there suddenly arose from without a loud tumult of voices, as if of men wrangling and quarrelling with great bitterness. This was followed by a scuffle, the quick trampling of feet, and a single shot; after which, for a moment or two, all was still. But while both Marcelly and her attendant stood lost in amazement—for Marcelly had sprung from her bed on the first commotion, and the woman exhibited equal surprise with herself—other sounds, manifestly as little anticipated as these, attracted their notice. There was a command sternly uttered "to lead the way." It was succeeded by the tread of two persons approaching; and in a few seconds an effort was made to throw open the door. "Save me, save me, I beseech you," exclaimed Marcelly, throwing herself upon her knees before her companion. But the hag, not less alarmed than herself, shrank from her, and rushing towards the corner of the room in which the truckle-bed stood, endeavoured to conceal herself behind the coverlet.

The attempt to force an entrance failed, and there was a second pause of brief duration. Then came a repetition of that stern voice which had previously been heard, requiring some one to produce the key at his peril. It was obeyed

with the rapidity of thought. Marcelly heard the key revolve in the lock—the door grated upon its hinges, and a heavy step upon the threshold—but she heard no more. Her senses, which had long wavered, forsook her utterly, and she fell flat upon the floor.

How long she might have lain in this state it was impossible for Marcelly to tell, but when she recovered her consciousness and looked around, the scene of her existence appeared to have wholly changed. The little low-roofed room, with its blazing fire and scanty furniture, was exchanged for an open boat, which glided rapidly through the water to the measured cadence of six lusty rowers. It was broad daylight too, and her eyes being free to exercise themselves, she beheld, not without astonishment, the shores of Strath Diarmid on the lee bow; towards which, a hurried glance sufficed to convince her that she was steadily approaching. "In the name of Heaven, where am I?" exclaimed she, rising from a recumbent position, and sitting up.

"Safe—and under the protection one who will perish, if need be, in defending you," replied a voice, the tones of which spoke music to her ears. "Look up, my dear child, and thank Heaven that it has delivered you from the snares of the wicked."

"Oh! Mr. Macpherson," exclaimed the agitated girl; how came you here? How can I sufficiently thank Providence for sending you to my aid! But where am I now? where have I been all the night? and whither do you carry me?"

"Compose yourself, my love," replied Parson Neil, "and you shall know all in good time. In the mean while, be content to learn that you are safe; that you are on your way home; and that, with God's blessing, you will embrace your father before he is made aware that you have been in danger at all. So cheer up, and restrain your curiosity till a more convenient moment arrive for gratifying it."

"But you will at least tell me by whom this outrage has been committed. I heard a voice that was not strange to me; and I am sure——"

"Hush, hush, Marcelly!" interrupted the Parson. "Whatever your suspicions may be, keep them to yourself. Remember that more than the honour of one individual is concerned, and it will not do to trifle even with an individual's honour. You shall know every thing when the convenient season comes; but now not a question must be asked, because not an answer will be given."

Compelled, by this declaration, to repress a feeling which, *her circumstances*, deserves to be accounted as something

more than common curiosity, Marcelly became very soon aware that for conversation of an indifferent nature she was wholly unfit. Her thoughts wandered over the past, or vainly sought to discover a clew for the future; but of the present she was entirely regardless. The Parson observed her absence, and was at no loss to account for it. He did not, therefore, harass her with needless questions, but falling himself into a train of anxious thought, at once followed the example which his companion set.

In this mood the voyage was continued, till the promontory of Ardmore reared its bald front before them. "Pull for the cove," said the Parson, addressing himself to the rowers; and they obeyed the injunction with good-will. A few strokes carried the boat round a neck of land into a little bay or creek, which ran up towards the road, and in five minutes the bow oar was shipped, and the tow-line carried actively on shore. Not a moment was lost either by Marcelly or the Parson, in effecting their disembarkation. A rude flight of steps carried them to the top of the hill—then came a hurried walk across the lawn, and the door being as usual, open, the little party entered unnoticed, and made at once for the breakfast-room. Ardmore rose to bid them welcome—and his daughter fell sobbing into his arms.

CHAPTER XXI.

We left Allan proceeding at a brisk trot on the road to Glasgow. He travelled, on this occasion, alone; that is to say, his sole attendant was the hostler or groom employed by the owner of his post-horse, to carry back the steed to its proper stable. The pace at which he proceeded, moreover, indicated that particular frame of mind, when the presence of any companion, no matter how lively or intelligent, is apt to be distasteful. Nor would the stranger who drew that inference, whether he reasoned from the taciturnity or the notions of the wayfarer, have found himself far lost in error. Never did human being labour under a greater variety of painful emotions. Utterly degraded in his own eyes—the slave, the purchased slave of a stranger—sold to the commission of an offence against which even his deadened conscience rose in arms, and convinced that there was no retreat from the contract, it is little to be wondered at if the occasional hasty glances which he threw upon his present and future condition harrowed up his very soul, and caused his brain to burn almost to madness. Nor can it be said that he found much of relief in considering the nature of that business in which he was about immediately to embark. True, it was of his own seeking entirely. After months of hesitation and misgiving, he had come deliberately to the opinion that such a step was inevitable; and he now only acted in fulfilment of resolutions formed with all possible reluctance and delay. Nevertheless, there lingered amid utter selfishness, one spark of better feeling, which harassed, though it was without the power to guide a darkened judgment. Besides, there was, at least, the chance of failure; and should that chance occur, what was to become of him?

In proportion as these harrowing visions passed across his mind, Allan slackened or quickened his pace, causing the *unfortunate animal* which he bestrode, to participate in his

sufferings; occasionally, he would pull the bridle so tight that the brute could scarcely move at all, and the groom experienced some difficulty in retaining his proper station. At this rate he would creep on for perhaps a quarter of a mile, when some new idea occurring, he would strike spurs into his horse's flank, and dash forward at a gallop. "I jalouse ye're no' muckle acquaint wi' riding, Stir," interposed the menial. "At ony rate, our beasts are no just used to sic paces." But the remonstrance went unheeded. Either Allan heard it not, or acted as if the case were so, for he neither vouchsafed a syllable in reply, nor changed his mode of travel.

Arrived at the village of Whitburn, Allan's sole inquiry was whether or not fresh horses might be had. It was in vain that mine host of the Tod and Lamb threw out sundry broad hints intended to delay his progress, as that the day was wearing apace—the roads rough—Glasgow a great way distant, and many loose folks abroad; Allan was deaf to them all. He could travel just as conveniently by night as by day—to fatigue he was perfectly indifferent; and as to loose people—he had long learned to despise them, because his hand was competent to protect his own head. The horses were accordingly ordered out, and while the process of saddling went forward, time barely sufficed to swallow a dose of strong brandy, which, at the period of which we are now writing, was nowhere to be had in greater perfection than at the little road-side public houses in Scotland. This done, and his former conductor satisfied, Allan again mounted, and set forward, for a time, at a pace at least as rapid as that which had marked the previous stage in his journey. But though equally eager to get on, it appeared as if he were more master of himself than formerly. There were none of those bursts which excited the surprise of the Edinburgh groom; nor did he maintain throughout the dogged silence which had heretofore characterized him. On the contrary, he encouraged his companion, from time to time, to communicate information touching the country through which they passed; and more than once took part in the conversation by asking questions. The consequence was, that the man, who, guided by the information of his predecessor, had begun his journey in no friendly mood, became softened and won over, and the two jogged along, side by side, in the most sociable manner possible.

Night was closing, when an increased traffic along the road, together with a more frequent recurrence of villas, hamlets, and detached manufactories, gave notice that the

travellers were approaching the end of their journey. It was but natural, under such circumstances, that the guide should hazard an inquiry touching the inn or place of entertainment towards which they were proceeding. He was answered vaguely; and like a true Scotchman, he began immediately to recommend the house of a relative of his own. "It's no just the head inn, like; 'deed, I canna althegither compare it wi' the Bucks-head; but a better public ye'l no find in a' Glasgow, nor a civiller landlord. Tam Cootle's well kent for the decentest man in Lanarkshire, and his drink beats a'."

"And what may be the sign in which Mr. Cootle delights?" asked Allan.

"A vera creditable sign," replied the guide, "a great favourite in the city of Glasgow. It's the Twa Shuttles, well kent as the best change-house in the Gorbals."

"And where may the Gorbals be?" demanded Allan.

"Hoot, oot! dinna ye ken the Gorbals? I thought a'body kent the Gorbals. But ye'll be a stranger to Glasgow, Ise warrant."

"This is my first visit to it, sure enough," replied Allan.

"'Od man, isna that extraordinar! I thought a'body fra your country kent Glasgow; for ye're a Westland-man, I jalouse. Howsomever, Ise just tak ye to Tam Cootle's, and he'll soon mak ye acquaint wi' Glasgow. There's muckle to be seen there."

"I am much obliged to you," replied Allan; "but I believe I must decline your offer for the present. I expect to meet a friend at the Highland Drover in the Broomielaw, or some such place; and if you will guide me thither, I will thank you. You are acquainted with the street, I doubt not?"

"Acquaint wi't? what for should I no'? it's the blackguardest place about a' the city. Naebody gangs there bena sailor lads, 'prentices, and cabin-boys, and sic like. Ye're no' gaun there at no rate!"

"Indeed but I am though," replied Allan; "I have business there which it might be difficult to transact any where else. You forget that I am a perfect stranger in the place."

"But ye can send for your friend to Tam Cootle's. Ise warrant he'll hae room for ye baith; and your friend, if he ken what's good, will be muckle obligated to you for making the exchange. We'll haud on this gate, gin ye please; this is the shortest way to the Gorbals."

"I tell you that I shall not go to the Gorbals, and that I *shall go to the Broomielaw*. I must therefore desire that

you guide me thither—that is, if you expect to be paid one farthing for what you have done already."

"Weel, weel, we'se no' fall out about it. Him that maun to Cooper will to Cooper; a willfu' man maun hae his way. But never tak my word for't again if ye dinna repent afore the night's owre. Tam Cootle's is the very best change-house in the town. The Buck's-head itsel canna beat it; but if ye dinna mind losing a good chance, I'm sure it's naething to me."

So saying, the groom struck into the proper lane, grumbling as he went, and led on till they reached the bridge. This they traversed, though not till Allan, struck by the singularity of the scene, had paused for a brief space on the centre arch, and gazed around him. From that elevated position he beheld, amid the gloom of night, the river rolling its masses beneath, along which a thousand lights from the houses that overhung its banks were glancing brilliantly. To his right, indeed, there was profound darkness; for there the Green, like a desert, threw its shadow across the tide; but leftward, multitudes of lights appeared to dance and rock upon the stream, which breaking against the prows of countless vessels, produced a ceaseless murmur. "What a picture of wealth and industry," said Allan aloud, "does this night-scene present! The commerce of half the world seems to be concentrated here. The people of Glasgow may well be proud of their city."

"'Deed may they," replied the guide, in some degree restored to his good humour, "and proud enough they are, the bits o' bodies. But if ye wad hae been persuaded to pit up at Tam Cootle's, ye wad hae got muckle insight into the cause. 'Od he's a clever chield, Tam Cootle. Deil an there be aught belonging to Glasgow, that he canna tell ye baeth the upshot and the down-come o't."

Allan, however, made no reply, but spurred forward; his guide instructing him when to turn to the left, and how to direct his movements after he had done so. He passed along a quay, crowded with carts, barrows, porters, seamen, and all the other appliances of active trade, which gives to its votaries ample employment long after other men have suspended their labours. Allan was much interested by the scene. Nevertheless he pursued his progress steadily, and paused at last, only when informed by his companion that the Highland Drover stood before them.

It is not necessary to describe at length either the hostelry that bore the imposing banner of the Westland Drover, or the personal equipment of the individual who managed his

affairs. Enough is done when we state that the former corresponded in all respects to the ideas which its exterior was calculated to excite. Frequented almost exclusively by cattle-dealers from the hills, and the masters and crews of the meanest description of fishing-smacks, its accommodations, both for man and beast, were homely enough; which the landlord, himself a native of Argyleshire, endeavoured with commendable zeal to keep as nearly as possible to their primitive model. By this personage, a short, stout, hale man, of perhaps sixty years of age, Allan was received with the mixture of civility and manliness which forms a striking feature in the address of a Highlander; and requesting to be favoured with a private apartment, was immediately ushered upstairs.

"Has any inquiry been made for Mr. Macoll?" asked he, as the landlord, after placing a candle on the table, seemed to hesitate, as if waiting for the usual order.

"Troth, and there just has," replied mine host; "and if ye be the gentleman, him that speered for you is no' far off."

As he spoke, the figure of a man filled up the open door-way, and advanced beyond the landlord. "It is all right," said Allan again. "You may withdraw, landlord."

"And what will your honour hae for supper?" demanded the persevering host.

"Any thing you please," replied Allan impatiently; "only leave us for half an hour, and I will thank you."

"But your meat might be cooking all the time," rejoined mine host. "Just say what it's to be, and yese no' be disturbed again till a' is ready."

"The devil, if you will," replied Allan, waxing warm. "Get whatever you please; cook the whole contents of your larder, if you like it; only go and leave this gentleman and me to settle our business, which is pressing."

"Weel, sir, your will is mine," replied the host; "I'll supper you like a prince, since you please to leave the arrangement to me." So saying he withdrew, and closed the door after him.

"Well, Ranald," said Allan, as soon as their host's back was turned, "what intelligence do you bring? Punctual I see you are, and of your zeal I do not entertain a doubt. Are matters in a train? Are your arrangements made to your own satisfaction?"

"She's done her best," replied Red Ranald, now metamorphosed into the semblance of a trader from the Isle of Skie, "The lads are ready, the boat's at the shore, and the auld tower is fitted up for the occasion. Beyond that she

disna take ony charge. Ye maun manage the rest yoursel."

"And when do we set out?" continued Allan. "I am ready now if time presses; and to-morrow morning at the latest every obstacle will, I trust, be removed. What say you?"

"We canna just move the night," replied Ranald; "for the lads are gaen out, and they'll no' be at hame before morning. But as soon after sun-rise as ye may find it convenient to stir they'll be at their post. Have ye the money? for without that I doubt there will be nae managing them."

"I have," replied Allan. "Let me see, how many hands are there?"

"Four besides hersel," replied Ranald.

"And they were promised———"

"Three guineas the piece, and meal and whisky; forby five to pay the hire of the boat; and a guinea to Jean Mac Clure, the groother's wife."

"And your own hire, Ranald; how do we calculate that?"

"She's no hireling," replied the savage haughtily, "though she may na be above accepting a present frae a gentleman."

"Well, well, we shall not quarrel about a name. Here are five-and-twenty pounds—pay out of it all necessary expenses, and keep the remainder for yourself. And tell me, is all prepared elsewhere?"

"All," replied Ranald, while he transferred the money from Allan's purse to his own pocket. "The signal is agreed on—the time of night settled—we are but to lie concealed till accident bring that night about. And we need not fear that we shall hae to wait long."

"You are sure that no suspicion is abroad?"

"Perfectly. Except those immediately interested in the play, no one dreams of it. We have kept our own counsel faithfully."

"It is well," said Allan, while at the same time he wrung the hand of his associate in violence. "You have stood by me nobly, Ranald, in my hour of need—may I perish if I fail to stand by you! And now, what say you, shall we sup together, for I hear the landlord's step on the stair?"

Ranald, however, excused himself. He had various matters to adjust preparatory to the morrow; he could not therefore spare the time; but he would be at hand to direct Allan to the boat by dawn the following day. Allan did not press him, and he withdrew just as the host, followed by a huge bare-footed lass, arrived to spread a cloth over the supper-table.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE landlord had been as good as his word; for the table groaned under the multitude of dishes with which he considered himself bound to garnish it. Not a delicacy which the suburbs of Glasgow could produce was omitted; from the broiled Glasgow-magistrate, down to the Welsh rabbit; and the liquor was scarcely less abundant, certainly not less exquisite in flavour than the edibles. Allan stared with astonishment at the feast. "Do you take me for an ogre?" said he, "that you produce all this for my solitary consumption?"

"Oo, that's naething at a'," replied mine host coolly. "When a gentleman orders me to dress the deevil, I aye ken that he has a nice stomach; and I tak good care to provide variety. There's wealth o' choice afore you, sir, so ye needna starve, ony how."

Allan seated himself without farther parley, and would have fallen to without ceremony; but soon found that he was not destined to eat alone. The landlord, uninvited, assumed a chair at the head of the table, and did at least as much justice to his own cookery as his guest. Allan would have been surprised at this act of cool assurance, had he not spent some time in the Lowlands. But remembering that the custom was almost universal, except in large towns, and justly concluding that mine host of the Drover had not yet acquired the refinements of a capital, he submitted to the restraint without complaining. It endured till the meal was finished, and the better portion of a quart measure of excellent Bordeaux discussed. At last, however, the landlord, whose utmost efforts to draw his companion into conversation had failed, quitted the room; and Allan once more breathed freely, like a man conscious that he is delivered from the presence of an insufferable nuisance.

As soon as the door was closed, Allan, after swallowing

the remainder of the wine, rose, and began to traverse the apartment backwards and forwards with an uneasy tread. He looked out occasionally from the window, but all was dark below, except where the reflection of a candle streamed into the water; and the bustle and noise of busy men, began by degrees to wax more faint. But there was no relaxation from turmoil and anxiety in Allan's mind. "What am I going to do?" said he, speaking to himself in an audible whisper. "Can any good come of it? Is it possible to credit my mother's assurances, and to believe that she may, after all, forgive the wrong, and learn to love him who wronged her? Oh, no, no! It is the act of a desperate man—of a selfish, an ineffably selfish man!—of one who, while he says that he would lay down his life for the object of his affection, gives proof that he cannot, or will not, put a check upon his meanest passions! Yet have I not cause?—do not my wrongs cry aloud to Heaven? Ay, and against Heaven, for there they began. Love me!" continued he, as he stopped opposite to an old-fashioned mirror, and closely examined his own features in the glass, "who could love an image so loathsome as that! Am I then to blame? Because Nature has thought fit to make me what I am, must I, therefore, be content to stand separated for ever from the dearest and tenderest ties that make society what it is? No! I love her! God knows how truly, God knows how tenderly!—let her but return that love, and I am——What?—sold, sold, lost, utterly lost for ever!—no redemption, no recovery!—bound hand and foot!—by one whom I know not!—sworn to betray my own kindred and relatives, and to cover with eternal infamy a name never, till now, disgraced! What a situation is mine!"

As he uttered this, he smote his hands violently together, and gasped for breath. But the strong energy of despair succeeded to that momentary weakness. A measure of brandy stood upon the table; he swallowed it at a draught; and his nerves, which had well nigh run down, became again restored to their tension.

"Hah, hah!" exclaimed he, with a wild laugh, "how conscience does make cowards of us! Conscience! and what is conscience? A bugbear with which to frighten children; —a will-o'-the-wisp, that carries women hither and thither, but of which men take no heed. Did he not reason well? What is character to me? or fame, or station?—ay, or kindred, and the ties of blood?—I laugh at them all. Give me women and wine, (was not that his phrase?) and other tan-

gible pleasures; and for the rest—go to, we know nothing of the rest!"

He rang the bell as he said this, and ordered an additional supply of liquor. It was brought, and drunk off, without producing the smallest effect. Intoxicated he could not become. There are states, both of body and mind, when neither wine nor spirits will produce intoxication; and his restlessness, so far from being allayed, only became more and more insupportable. Again he drew back the curtain, and looked out. The moon was up, and though not yet at the full, still shed a delicate lustre over the scene. There lay the river, covered with vessels of various sizes, but now profoundly tranquil, except that its own increasing brawl broke in upon the stillness. Not a human being traversed the quay, and the lights which a few hours ago glanced gaily in the running stream were all extinguished. Allan seized his hat, and passing quietly down stairs, let himself out at the front door, and stood upon the margin of the Clyde.

A soft air arising from the water blew into his face, and his burning brain felt it. He gazed up into the sky. The stars, in countless millions, were out, twinkling and dancing round their mistress; and the dark blue of the heavens was unchequered even by a fleece of cloud. "O that I could look there with hope!" said Allan, in a low tone. But ere the good feeling which began to arise in his bosom could mature itself, two figures suddenly emerged from behind the corner of a wall, and drew off his attention to other matters. Their backs were towards him, and they turned away; he might have, therefore, shunned them altogether, had he been so disposed, but a strange curiosity, for which he knew not how to account, tempted him to follow. In a moment, both the past and the future were swept aside. Withdrawing under the shadow of the houses, he walked briskly, but stealthily, in pursuit of the strangers, and he had soon the satisfaction to find that he gained upon them.

The strangers suddenly stopped close beside the river, at a spot where a small cutter lay at her moorings. It happened that a wall, which separated one wharf from another, ran down to within a few feet of them, and Allan saw, that if he could gain unobserved the shady side of it, there would be no difficulty in planting himself in such a position as that their conversation would become perfectly audible. Some little hazard attended the enterprise; for he must needs cross an interval of broad moonlight, and should either of them chance to turn round while he did so, a discovery was inevitable. *Yet Allan* determined to brave the danger.

There was a strong desire in his mind, a restlessness which defied control, that impelled him, at all risks, to ascertain who they were. He dashed lightly at the open space, and saw, the next moment, that he had passed it unnoticed. To turn sharp to the left, and to creep along the shadow of the wall, was the work of an instant, and he was at once within three paces of the objects of his curiosity. Here Allan took his station, just where a buttress pushing itself forward secured him against detection; yet the first glance which he threw towards the parties, had well nigh proved fatal to him. There was no mistaking one of them. He recognised, at once, the frieze coat, the loose brown trousers, and the bonnet of the Skie trader; and had these failed to assure him of the truth, the pale countenance turned full towards him was that of Red Ranald, and none besides. Who his companion was, Allan could not tell, for the back of that man was towards him, and a long, loose cloak so thoroughly enshrouded his figure, as to leave no marks by which to identify him. Allan, therefore, could only observe that he was somewhat below the middle stature, and that his gestures and bearing were those of one who holds converse, not with an equal, but with an inferior.

The parties were engaged in earnest conversation, of which, though it was conducted in whispers, Allan could overhear much. What reached him, however, seemed to be rather the conclusion than the beginning of a conference; at least, both the questions put were abrupt and unconnected, and the answers prompt, and apparently given with readiness.

"You said that the numbers were six," observed the man in the cloak.

"Six, including Allan and myself," was the reply.

"And armed?—all armed?"

"Leave that to me. Arms there will be, doubtless; but I will take care of them."

"And when do you set out?"

"To-morrow, at sun-rise."

"Can you not delay a little? I shall scarcely have time under three days. Cannot you delay till the day after to-morrow?"

"Impossible! He would have gone to-night, had I not opposed it; and beyond to-morrow there will be no detaining him. But delays may arise elsewhere."

"May arise!—true. But, in such a case, we must not trust to accident. Well, I have six hours to spare, at all events. How goes the night?"

"It has just struck twelve. If you start immediately, you will gain more than six hours, for the tide will hardly serve before eight; and as you will find all in readiness, there is little cause to apprehend that any accident can occur. At the same time every moment is precious."

"It is so; and therefore, the sooner I am on the road the better. Once more, be cautious and faithful. You will make the signal as soon after you land as possible; and with respect to the rest——"

Here the speaker put his face close to the ear of Ranald, by which means Allan could not catch a word of the conclusion of the sentence. Nor was another spoken; for the stranger, drawing his cloak about him, so as at once to cover the lower part of his face and leave his limbs free for moving, turned abruptly round, and walked away. Ranald, too, after watching him some moments, retired in an opposite direction, and ere Allan could well determine whether or not to detain him and demand an explanation, he was out of sight.

Recovered from the astonishment which for a moment or two had paralyzed his limbs, Allan began to retrace his steps to the inn totally unable to account on any rational grounds for the strange scene to which he had been a witness. Who could the stranger be, and what the subject to the discussion of which he was a partner? Was it possible that Ranald could, after all, prove a traitor? Yet to whom was he likely to betray the trust confided in him, and for what earthly purpose? It was certain, that if the thirst of gain actuated him, it was much more likely to be gratified by a perseverance in his present scheme than by its abandonment; and as to honour or pity, Allan knew his man too well to fear him on either of those heads. Nevertheless, there were many points in the conference which could relate only to the expedition in which Allan was about to embark. Had not Ranald specified their numbers to a man? nay, had he not named himself and his employer? By ————! it must be so. It was clear that Ranald had opened his mind to some one; and now, the sole question was to whom? "And that question shall be satisfactorily answered," muttered Allan to himself, "otherwise Heaven have mercy on him! It was well that I walked abroad. I see now how necessary caution is; and, let the result be what it may, I, at least, will do my best to provide against failure."

He reached the inn door as he concluded this sentence, and entered, as he had gone out, wholly unnoticed. He *heard, however, as* he traversed the passage, the noise

of carousing and laughter, fiddles squeaking, heavy feet dancing, coarse and untuned voices singing, with all the other accompaniments of low debauchery; and, strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that he abstained from taking part in the by-play only by a strong effort. But the effort was made successfully, and ringing his bell, the same awkward female that had waited on him at supper appeared, by whom he was conducted to his chamber.

It will readily be believed that Allan's slumbers that night were neither very sound nor very refreshing. The events of the evening continued long to engross his thoughts and drive sleep from his eyelids, and when the latter closed at last it was only that Fancy might bestir herself the more, and dreams take the place of waking meditation. A variety of wild and extravagant visions passed across his mind. Now he was standing by St. Anthony's Chapel, in earnest conversation with Hatfield respecting their contract. Anon, he was in a court of justice, listening to the sentence of death passed upon his mother, in consequence of certain evidence which he had borne. By and by, he was walking arm-in-arm with Marcelly by the loch side, pouring out a tale of love, to which she listened tenderly, when, all at once, she melted from his touch, and disappeared. Then came a confused tumult of soldiers, drums beating, horses prancing, and last of all, a gibbet, from which swung mournfully in the blast the body of some one who had been hung in chains. Allan approached it, but just as he was about to gaze into its face, a peal of thunder burst over him, and the whole scene vanished. He awoke in dire affright, his hair standing on end, and the sweat rolling in drops over his brow; and he blessed his stars when he saw that the dawn had broken, so that to sleep again would not be necessary.

He had risen from his uneasy couch, and was partially dressed when a knock at the chamber-door announced the arrival of a visiter. It was Ranald, come to warn him that the hour of sailing was at hand, and that the crew, with every thing necessary for the voyage, were already on board. Allan expressed himself well pleased at the intelligence, yet suggested that they had better breakfast ere they set out, as there were a few matters which he wished to arrange preparatory to the commencement of the enterprise. "And you, too, Ranald," continued he, "may possibly require an hour to yourself. Considering that yesterday was devoted so entirely to your friends, I fear you left yourself

little time for sleep. You were late out—too late for an early voyager."

"She's no' muckle taen up wi' her bed," replied Ranald, coolly; "and night and day are pretty much the same wi' her."

"But your friend, your confidant—probably he may feel the effects of the night air; though to say the truth, he was better provided against it than yourself."

"Humph!" replied Ranald, she disna quite understand."

"Why, your confidential friend, to whom you communicated the amount of our force and the outline of our intended operations. Look ye, Ranald," continued he, changing the tone of raillery to that of sternness, "I should be glad to know with whom you held that meeting last night close to the water's edge, just as the clock struck twelve. You know very well that I am not a man to be trifled with, and that if you play me false, your life is not worth an hour's purchase. Who was that man?"

Ranald looked at the speaker keenly, and then replied with the utmost coolness, "Who should it be, binna the Groother. We couldna do without him; for his wife's in attendance, and it was useless to trust him by halves. He's awa' to get things ready, and ye'll find him at his post."

"The Groother!" replied Allan, pronouncing the word slowly, and with the intonation of one who thinks deeply while he speaks:—"Is that all? Oh, very well! Perhaps we had better not delay for breakfast: I take it for granted you have some grub on board."

So saying, he ordered the landlord to produce his bill, and paid it without a complaint. He then caused his cloak-bag to be removed to the vessel, a tight-built cutter of perhaps twenty tons, whither, attended by Ranald, he immediately followed; and in five minutes the sails were set, and the gallant bark hurrying, under a favourable wind and tide, down the river.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The bark flew merrily down the river, the tiny foaming under her bows, while the wind bellying o foresail, and keeping her spanker just abaft the bea her beautifully and steadily in the water. There spirit of exhilaration in the progress which she m which even Allan became conscious, insomuch that, walked the little quarter-deck, a day-dream of tranq yet in store would dance, for a moment or two, bef mind's eye. Yet was he conscious all the while th business in which he was engaged, struck at the ve of honor and right feeling. Not for a moment we eyes shut to the pictures of anguish and distress whi future, behold it as he might, disclosed; and even i he ventured to anticipate aught of peace at the last, only as one gazes on a spark at the end of some lon fearful avenue of total darkness. Nevertheless, su the extraordinary materials of which human nature i posed, that Allan felt occasionally as if he, at least guiltless. "They drive me to this," so he argued wit self; "God knows how reluctantly on my part. But obey my destiny; and after this is done, then will a lif devoted to make amends for one injury, blot out all m of the past; and she will be happy, and so will I."

On flew the bark, the wind freshening as she appr the ocean, though still sufficiently moderate to pe mass of canvass to be displayed; while mansion and h corn-field and grove, appeared to sweep by with the r of thought. And now old Dumbarton's peaked fo was left behind, and the cloud-capped summits of the A shire hills loomed large upon the bow, like the enc fragments of a ruined world. But these, in their turn left behind, as well as the romantic Kyles of Bute; a rugged point of Cantire being finally rounded, the Iri

ept their vessel along. Here daylight wholly deserted
m ; and the night closing in with clouds, and an appear-
:e of wind, it was judged prudent to slacken sail, and
er as close as possible to the land.

Affected in some degree by the uneasy night which he
l spent—in some degree soothed by the tranquillity of a
ourable voyage, Allan retired early to his berth, leaving
: entire charge of the cutter to Red Ranald, who under-
k to keep watch till dawn. He soon fell asleep, and
ugh amid his slumbers he may have heard the confused
ise of a tumult on deck, it was not sufficiently boisterous
recall him to the use of his senses. He awoke, however,
last, and became instantly aware that the little vessel
bed and rolled in a very alarming manner. Allan ran
on deck. The sea was in a state of the wildest commo-
n; huge waves were rolled on by a gale, which had com-
led the crew to take in almost every stitch of canvass,
l before which the cutter was now scudding, at a rapid
e, directly towards a lee-shore.

"In God's name! what are you about?" exclaimed Allan.
Have you no anchor on board? Do you not see that we
ll be ashore in ten minutes?"

"Would you have us swamp her at once?" replied Ra-
ld, who, amid the excitement of the storm, seemed to
ve laid aside his usual clownish manner. "No anchor
uld hold here; and if it did, she must founder at her
orings. No, if we fail to make that cove, it is all over
th us. Steady, steady with the helm there. Now star-
rd a little. So, so, that will do. Keep her straight a-
ad. You see the cape opening. There—starboard again.
hat are you about?" cried he, springing wildly to seize
e tiller.

And well it was that Ranald's eye proved as accurate, as
: arm was strong, and his limbs flexible. A single turn
the wrist in a wrong direction would have brought the
tter right upon the rocks, over which the sea was break-
g with tremendous fury. But Ranald's wrist moved with
: exactitude of thought. One scrape, a slight one, told
w imminent the danger was, but no injury was sus-
ned. Amid the very foam, as it receded from the cliff,
: bark rushed round the head-land, into a little natural
in begirt with rocks; where, completely sheltered from
: blast, she rode snugly and quiet, as if in a mill-pond.

The excitation attendant on escape from peril having in
ne degree worn off, Allan began to look with a gloomy
e upon *his situation*, and to murmur bitterly at the delay

which must occur in the farther prosecution of his voyage. He found but an indifferent comforter in Ranald, who persisted in reminding him that he had a close run for his life, and that to complain of a little loss of time was nothing better than a downright tempting of Providence. It appeared, moreover, as if Ranald were the reverse of anxious to put to sea again, inasmuch as he permitted four-and-twenty hours to be expended in effecting repairs, which might have been made good in twelve. At last, however, the gale having moderated, a light and pleasant breeze blowing from the south, the friendly cove was abandoned, and towards noon on the third day after quitting the Broomielaw, the port to which they were destined hove in sight.

Separated from the main-land by a narrow channel of perhaps a hundred-and-fifty yards in width, stood the ruins of a baronial castle, the original habitation of the chiefs of clan Diarmid, and founded, as report went, by the son of the Conqueror. It consisted of a spacious court-yard, surrounded by lofty walls, and flanked at each angle by square towers, one of which, and one only, retained so much of its former character as to be still impervious to the weather. All the rest were mere shells; hollow in the interior, open to the heavens, and blackened along the sides as if by the influence of fire. The walls, in like manner, were here and there broken down, to within six feet of the foundation, and presented in the interior faint traces of having once given support to habitations for men or beasts. There was an antique gate-way, of which the arch remained perfect, rudely carved, and facing towards the main; while a smaller aperture in the rear denoted that provision had been carefully made to facilitate either an escape from leaguere, or the means of annoyance to the besiegers. The whole pile was composed of a dark red stone, greatly worn by the spray of the sea, in some places approaching to porous; and it extended in a sort of irregular parallelogram on every side save one, down to the very rocks that overhung the ocean.

Towards that ruined fortalice Ranald turned the head of the cutter, which he directed into a little bay or natural harbour, formed by the projection of two cliffs, on the northern face of the island. It was a small, but commodious basin; which being surrounded on two sides by tall rocks, on the other by the castle walls, afforded to such vessels as were competent to enter, a place of concealment as well as of safety. Thither, therefore, the cutter steered, and her sails being taken in, she was promptly made fast to an iron ring soldered into the stone. But it was not alone in this

guiding him to his first resting-place that Ranald gave proof of his fidelity to Allan's cause. There lay in that basin an open boat, fitted for the reception of four rowers; and immediately on landing Allan was made aware that the means of propelling her were forthcoming. Concealed amid some bushes in a reft of the rock, lay four oars, which, by Ranald's direction, were immediately placed on board.

"Ye'll wait here till nightfall," said Ranald, as he conducted his employer under the archway, and led him forward towards a low chamber in the largest of the towers. "We can attempt nothing in the day, and even at night we may fail. But our chances of failure are at all events least, if we take the mantle of darkness to cover us. In the mean time you can look about you and judge whether the arrangements I have made are suitable. Jean, Jean, I say," continued he, knocking at the door; "it is I, Red Ranald; open and let us in, you devil's dam."

The door was slowly, and as it seemed reluctantly opened, by some one who grumbled heavily all the while; and Allan found himself, on stepping forward, across the threshold of a chamber, admirably adapted for concealment, however little entitled to the denomination of comfortable. It was a small recess, about twelve feet in length, by six, or at most eight in breadth, dimly lighted through a couple of loop-holes, that looked into the court-yard. At one extremity stood a rude settle or couch, overspread with a mattress of heather, a rug, and a couple of blankets; while near the fireplace were two stools, as well as a bit of scaffolding, intended to represent a table. Such was the furniture; for the earthen-floor was bare, and if we except a pot which stood simmering over a dull peat-fire, there was not another article in the place.

"This is dreary enough, Ranald," said Allan with a sort of shudder; "and your attendant seems none of the most gentle. However, it may serve for one night at all events; and beyond that it will probably not be wanted. You can make a better fire, Jean, can't you?"

"The fire's good enough," replied the woman gruffly. "If it sairs me, it may sair your leman anyhow, Glenarroch. But Ise make it bleeze up an ye like; only ye may expect other folk to see the bleeze besides me."

"Silence, you growling she-dog," said Ranald, "and obey the orders of your betters. As soon as the night sets in, take care that you do make it blaze up; and what is more, learn for once in your life to keep a civil tongue in

your head. If the lady suffer wrong or insult at your hands —mind—the water is deep, and the cliff high."

"Is that it, Red Ranald? Am I to plumb the loch in my turn? First the brother, then the husband, and now the widow? Thy hand is not yet clean, Ranald, and thou wouldst defile it again!"

"Peace, beldam!" replied the outlaw; "and go see what you can provide for dinner. What have you in that pot? Some stolen kid or lamb, I doubt not."

So saying, he seized the utensil, and pushing the woman violently by the shoulder, commanded her to fetch a dish; an order which she obeyed, as she appeared to do all his injunctions, rather through fear than from affection. A wooden trencher was produced, into which Ranald emptied a savoury stew of mutton, potatoes, greens, and onions. Upon this he and Allan proceeded to regale themselves with the appetites of men who have long fasted; and a keg of whisky being handed to him by one of the boatmen, the friends very soon gave proof that their desire to drink was at least commensurate with their craving for food. They caroused deeply; and as the liquor began to take effect, they became from quaich to quaich more and more communicative.

"And when she is secured, Allan," said Ranald, "what is to follow? Have ye provided a home, and a priest, and the means of subsistence? For my part I think the plan seems to be wonderfully foolish and romantic."

"That is because you don't look so far before you as I," replied Allan. "What am I to do? Live at my ease, to be sure. Think you I am without friends in the world! No, thank God! I have friends—friends who will go farther to serve me, than I would to serve myself. Let me alone for that. You and I, Ranald, have acted together before now, and we shall act together again to our mutual advantage. We will do—of that you may rest assured."

"But whither do you intend to carry her? for this is no place of permanent concealment, you well know."

"Why, whither should I carry her, but to Edinburgh to be sure? You have been often enough at Glasgow, would think, to know by this time that there is no hiding place like your large town. The remotest glen of the Highlands is but a flat surface compared to the Cannongate. No, no, Ranald. Let us once make sure of the prize, and the deuce is in it if we fail to keep what we get."

"You have the means for all this prepared, of course," said Ranald, "because I go no farther than the spot on which we now sit."

"I don't understand you, Ranald," exclaimed Allan; "I
as distinctly assured that you would place yourself under
r authority till this adventure should be completed; and it
nnot possibly be completed on this side the Clyde, any-
w."

"I know nothing about that. My engagements extends
ly to placing the girl in your power; you yourself must
ke charge of her from the moment I deliver her into your
nds. Though, to be sure, I am open to conviction, and
ver slack to assist a friend in distress."

"I guessed as much," replied Allan, with a half sneer;
it is wonderful how much of argument there lies in those
ad yellow pieces marked with the head of——George the
econd."

"Of whom?" demanded Ranald.

"Of George the Second, to be sure;—of the lawful king
these realms, by the will of the people, and the voice of
e Parliament."

"Does Allan Breck acknowledge fealty to the Elector of
anover!"

"Pshaw! no matter whether he does or does not; only
the mean while be so good as pass the gray-beard, and
e that the people have a dram."

Allan filled his quaish as he spoke, drank it off and rose,
eclaring that he would taste no more liquor till the adven-
re was accomplished; and Ranald followed his example,
ey continued to lounge away the hours as they best could,
ll the sun had sunk behind the hills.

As soon as the twilight fairly closed around them, the boat
as manned, and the party at sea. Their voyage was pros-
erous beyond their most sanguine anticipations. It is true,
at all had been previously arranged—the hour, the place,
e words to be spoken as signal—nevertheless, on the exact
ight when all these could be brought to agree, it was impos-
ible for human foresight to calculate. Fortune so ordered
; that they had not been in hiding many minutes ere
he projected signal was given. The words "God's will be
one," uttered in a loud tone, and accompanied by a smart
lash of the hands as they struck together, told the marau-
ers that their game was started, and Marcelly became, in
onsequence, a captive in the power of one, whose scruples,
omewhat foreign to his nature in other respects, were cast
side.

Having secured their prisoner, and ascertained that every
omfort *of which they* were themselves in possession, lay
ithin her reach, Allan and Ranald withdrew to a part of

CHAPTER XXIV.

Landing safely on the shore of his native country, Allan felt as the first murderer may be supposed to have done, when every rock and tree in the infant world seemed to bear witness to his crime; and the presence even of inanimate substances was insupportable to him. He did not walk, but ran wildly along the sea-side, lashed forward by the most biting of all scourges, that of conscience; and maddened not more with the recollections of the past, than by horrible anticipations of the future. To say, however, that he reasoned at all would be to express ourselves very incorrectly. There was no order in his thoughts, no arrangement in his fantasies—but a deadly weight upon the brain itself, to struggle against which seemed utterly impossible. The sole relief, indeed, which he found, was in endeavouring to escape as speedily as possible from the vicinity of a spot where fate had stricken him to the earth; and hence his pace resembled that of one who flies for life, rather than of an ordinary traveller.

In this mood many miles were compassed; nor was it till he reached an arm of the sea, by crossing which he knew that he should escape from the Mac Diarmids' country, that he once slackened his pace. Even then, however, the spirit of restlessness abated nothing, for the ferryman was roused as if the destiny of an empire hung in the balance, and the boat hurried, amid utter darkness, from its mooring. But the opposite shore was no sooner gained than reason seemed to return. He no longer ran, but walked; the chaos of his ideas gradually moulded itself into shape, and both the past and the future began to produce pictures, intelligible at least to himself. He saw that he was utterly undone. The *single* device which he had ever harboured as of possible accomplishment—the sole dream of happiness which he had ever ventured to encourage, was dispersed for ever, and he

stood alone, literally, not theoretically alone, in the wide world. How this had occurred he did not pause to inquire. The conviction that his case was beyond the power of melioration—that destiny itself could work for him no farther wrong—preyed so heavily on his mind, that he did not care to inquire whence the failure had arisen. He was a desperate man, and he acknowledged that he was so.

When the idea takes possession of a man's mind that his affairs are irretrievably ruined, despair generally produces an external appearance of calm, which among careless observers is not unapt to be mistaken for resignation. As long as any lingering of hope remains—while there is a prospect, no matter how remote, of recovery, men fret and toil, and exhibit all the symptoms attendant on extreme uneasiness; but let the belief occur, that every avenue to recovery is closed, and let both reason and passion convert belief into conviction, then the mind, like a watch of which the mainspring is broken, runs down, and there are no means left by which to recall it to action. It was thus with Allan on the present occasion. Not only did fancy cease to busy itself, but his very limbs became languid and his bodily movements inert; indeed, it would have been difficult ere long for a mere stranger to tell that aught beyond the common concerns of life oppressed him.

We pass over the few incidents that occurred during a journey performed in such a frame of mind as this. Let it suffice to state, that Allan reached the door of his lodgings soon after the sun had set, on the sixth day from that on which he had quitted it; and that his return was welcomed by Callum with the devotion and respectful kindness, which scarcely any course of conduct on the part of his natural superior can teach a Highland domestic to cast aside. But though he rejoiced at his master's return, the faithful creature was shocked beyond measure at the change which so brief a space had wrought in his appearance. Formerly, if Allan's cheek was pale, it exhibited only the pallor of dissipation and late hours. His blood-shot eye, moreover, spoke rather of excesses than of dejection; for, though there was little of content in its restless expression, at least there was energy, if not hope. Now, every muscle in his countenance seemed relaxed and unstrung. The eye-lid drooped, the cheek was wan and hollow, and even the tone of his voice had lost its cadence. His step, too, once light and springy, resembled that of an old man; and his very body seemed bowed under the weight of misery or disease.

"*Ye're no' weel, sir,*" said Callum, as soon as his first

burst of joy had subsided. "Ye're no' weel at a'. Ye dinna look like yoursel'. Something's wrong wi' you, I am sure—and ye maun see the doctor. Let me help to pit ye to your bed, and then I'll gang and fetch him."

"Wrong, indeed, Callum," replied Allan bitterly. "Yes, all is wrong. I am ruined in soul and body, beyond the power of redemption. All the doctors in Edinburgh would fail to reach my case—it defies the skill of man."

"Hoot, toot! dinna say that," answered Callum; "there's plenty o' clever chields here in E'nbro'; and Ise warrant they'll find out the root o' your disease, be it what it may. But winna ye tak something afore ye lie down? There's a wee drappy left in your ain bottle, and ye'll no' be the war o' a dram."

"No, Callum," replied Allan with a faint smile, "not even a dram. I have nothing now to do but to go and hang myself, with as little delay as possible."

"'Od, ye maun do a good deal afore it come to that," replied Callum; "and by the same token here's a letter that a porter left for ye the streen; I had 'maist forgotten it."

Allan took the billet, opened, and read it. Immediately the colour mounted to his brow, and his eye assumed again something of the fire which was wont to sparkle in it. "How goes the night, Callum?" said he, tearing the letter and throwing it into the fire.

"It's just chappit eight."

"Why, then, I think I will take your advice, and try whether the blue devils may not, after all, be resisted with the aid of food and drink. Let me have what you can get ready in a moment; and, above all, take care that the magnum is not empty."

Callum ran to execute his master's orders, and Allan was left alone. He drew his chair close to the fire, placed his feet upon the fender, stirred up the coals till they emitted a blaze, and carefully raked out the cinders from the bars of the grate. "Something may come of this," said he, as he laid down the poker; "and if it do, then fortune will have played a less sourvy trick than she got credit for. At all events there is a ray of hope; and so long as even a single spark remains, we must endeavour to steer by its guidance. Yes," continued he, rising and walking across the room; "whatever scruples may have existed before, I now scatter to the winds. The quarrel is henceforth my own. Betrayed, thwarted, crossed at every turn; bayed by the whole tribe, and driven forth from their society—I henceforth renounce my name; and since the hands of all are directed against

me, I, like Ishmael, will turn my hand against all men. Lower than I am already fallen, I cannot fall—but I may rise; and though it be on the ruins of my country and kindred, am I to blame for that? No—this night I give myself wholly into his hands; and what was originally promised for the purpose of deceiving, shall be given in sincerity and truth."

As he said this, Callum returned with supper, of which Allan heartily partook. He did ample justice, likewise, to the liquor which his valet had provided; and then with a brain only so far heated as to render him capable of daring any thing, made ready to go abroad.

"Ye're no' gawn out the night?" observed Callum beseechingly; "mind how ill ye are, and hark how the rain blatters against the window! The wind blaws cauld and hollow frae the east, and ye'll get your death."

"No fear of that, Callum," replied Allan, as he drew his cloak round him, and passed without farther remonstrance into the street.

In the account which he had given of the state of the weather, Callum had not deceived his master. A heavy shower of rain, mingled with hail-stones and pieces of ice, was driven fiercely from the north-east by a boisterous wind, which sweeping along the High-street, met Allan full in the face, and occasioned considerable exertion on his part to enable him to make way against it. Stoutly and with teeth clenched together, he battled on, collecting from time to time the folds of his mantle, which the blast swept away; and gained the port in ample time to escape the annoyance of paying for the means of egress. Once more, thereof, he was in the King's Park, amid darkness so profound, that to distinguish objects at an arm's length from the eye would have been, for a time at least, impracticable. Nevertheless Allan knew in what direction the place of meeting lay. He held his course, therefore, not altogether at random; and the visual organs becoming by degrees habituated to the gloom, the broad outline of Arthur's Seat uprose like a shadow before him.

To ascend the side of the hill, and to gain the recess on which the ruins of St. Anthony's Chapel stood was the work of a few minutes. Now, however, as formerly, he had forestalled the hour of tryste; and hence for some time his sole employment consisted in listening to the blast as it howled through the hollows of the mountain, and in seeking to shelter himself, as he best could, from the storm. But his signal, often and impatiently repeated, was answered at last.

He had planted himself on this occasion with his face to that particular spot whence, on their previous meeting, Hatfield emerged. Nevertheless, the same circumstance took place now which had occurred then. Hatfield advanced on him from behind; and again, as he had done before, saluted him with as much abruptness as if he had risen from beneath the earth.

"You have outrun my expectations," said he, "and kept tryste to an hour. Be equally diligent and faithful in matters of more importance, and your fortune is made. How has your own affair gone off? Well, I trust; that is, satisfactorily to yourself."

"Entirely so," replied Allan with a laugh; "with such success, that not only is the prey lost, but the plotter, discovered and defeated, stands before you a man ruined past redemption. Hatfield, I will be candid with you. When we met here a week ago, I was but half your man. Nay, I will go farther—Your money I took, and would have taken it again, leaving you to repose in my promises what confidence you liked; but I would have fulfilled these promises or not, exactly as suited best with my own humours. Now I am your slave even to blood-shedding. I cannot show my face again among my kindred—I am without resources in the world—do with me what you choose."

"Upon my word, a very pretty confession!" replied Hatfield. "I am exceedingly obliged to you both for what you designed and what you now offer; but to be equally candid with yourself, if what you tell me be the fact, curse me if I know of what possible use you are likely to be to any one."

"What!" exclaimed Allan, "did you not tempt me to turn spy? I hesitated then, but now my scruples are vanished;—you have only to direct me how to proceed, and I will obey."

"I make no doubt of that," answered Hatfield; "but on your own showing, it would puzzle the devil himself to render this new-born zeal available. Why, man, don't you see that the world has entirely changed with you? As long as you possessed some credit at home—and it might possibly be little enough at the best of times—the opportunity of collecting information lay within your reach; but where, in fate's name, can you now exercise those talents of which you make so liberal a tender? However, I never like to judge of cases till I know them in detail; so be obliging enough to give me a full and particular account of this mishap."

Though far from relishing the flippant tone in which Hatfield inquired into his circumstances, Allan put so much vio-

lence on his own humours, as to describe, with tolerable accuracy, the position of his affairs, up to the moment of Marcelly's rescue. Hatfield heard him to an end with the most provoking indifference, and then coolly replied, that he had never known a more consummate blockhead in the whole course of his life. "Had you informed me of your situation in time, I might have either assisted you in the accomplishment of this absurd adventure, or dissuaded you from embarking in it; but as things have turned out, I can say no more than that you deserve your fate for your stupidity. I guessed it was a love affair all the while. With such a face and such a figure how could it be otherwise? And you have managed it so admirably, that the girl is lost, and yourself kicked neck-and-heels out of society! Truly, a most efficient ally you have rendered yourself to me and my employers! A pretty piece of work I have made of it too!—a nice bird to decoy, by mine honour!"

Allan's blood boiled. Not under any circumstances was he the sort of man to endure ridicule with patience; and harassed as his mind had been by recent events, it required, on the present occasion, a strong effort to suppress his fury. Yet, though his limbs shook, and his lip quivered, he spoke in a subdued tone—

"Your mirth is out of season, Hatfield, and may be dangerous. I met you here not to listen to rude jokes on my own person, but to ascertain whether or not our contract holds good."

"Our contract!" replied Hatfield. "Deuce take me if I know what it is. To be sure, you stand indebted to me in various sums, of which I shall probably require the reimbursement to-morrow; but beyond that, I am totally unacquainted with the existence of any contract between us."

"Am I not, then, to be employed as you yourself suggested?"

"Show me how you can be employed to advantage, and I answer yes; circumstanced as you have just declared yourself to be, I answer no—most positively."

"I am willing to accomplish any service that may be required of me. My arm is strong—my courage no man will presume to doubt."

"Curse your arm and your courage too! I tell you we don't want bravoes and bullies; we want men of intelligence and credit—and I presume you scarcely pretend to be one or the other."

"Is it *thus, then*, that you and I are to part?"

"*No, not exactly* thus," replied Hatfield. "We have

other matters to settle than this. I can't afford to be out of pocket all that I have advanced for you; though, had your wit been worth a groat, you should have had your own time to refund. But since you have chosen to knock your own fortunes on the head, I must look a little after mine. I hope you have some means of paying your just debts; because, if not——"

"Ay, what then?" demanded Allan, sternly.

"Why this—that you shall lie in the jail of Edinburgh till you rot."

"Miscreant, base-born, sordid miscreant!" exclaimed Allan, making a spring towards his companion; "not till I have given your worthless limbs to the kites and to the crows."

Hatfield, a bold and resolute man, was not taken by surprise. He stepped back so as to avoid Allan's grasp, and drawing a pistol from his breast, levelled it at his head. The hammer struck the pan, but no flash followed; and the next instant he was enveloped in the iron clutch of his adversary. A desperate, but a brief struggle followed. Allan, by far the more powerful of the two, bore his opponent to the earth; and falling heavily upon him, grasped him by the throat. "Spare my life!" shrieked Hatfield, wildly; but his prayer was unheeded. There was a sudden flourish of the Highlander's right hand, and something glared before the eyes of the prostrate man. The next instant Allan's dirk was buried in his throat. Twice, thrice, was the stab repeated, and a faint groan gave evidence that all was over.

CHAPTER XXV.

HE hand which had vainly grasped his collar, no sooner xed from its hold, than Allan sprang to his feet, satisfied ı the quiver of the body as it lay beneath him, that life extinct. He spurned the carrion with his heel, for his e passions not to be immediately allayed, even by the ification of revenge. Nevertheless, there is that in the ction, that the vital spark has been extinguished, which er fails to cause a speedy reaction in the mind even of whose rancour is most vindictive. Allan felt this al- t as soon as he kicked the insensible clay. His spirits erwent a collapse; the terrible concsiousness arose that ıad committed murder, and the conviction that his own was forfeited to the laws which he had just violated, ed itself, as it were, upon his consideration. He turned ıy in indescribable horror, and, totally incapable of ting any effort to place the body out of the reach of im- liate observation, ran with the speed of the whirlwind n the hill. In five minutes he had cleared the fields at ase, and turning off in the direction of the London road, hed wildly forward, he knew not whither.

Allan was well aware that both his hand and his cloak e bloody. The warm stream had dyed his wrist as each w was struck, and the folds of his garment caught the its as they spurted from the wounds. The blood was, by time, congealed upon him, and besides that, he knew where to look for a stream, by the aid of which the mned spot" might be eradicated; the dreadful idea ıed strength every moment, that to blot out those ghast- roofs of his guilt would become, ere long, impossible. n's brain swam round. There was not a pulse in his but beat till its rate might have been calculated by the e *of hearing alone*; and all command over his own ements seemed to desert him.

Onward he ran, like the Electra of Sophocles—go
an impulse altogether irresistible, and setting at defia
the wind and rain, which beat furiously in his face.
latter, indeed, he spread out his hands, rubbing the
time to time, in the hope that thus, at length, the fo
might be cleansed out, and the mark of homicide r
from his person. Like the course of the comet, h
his was eccentric and without aim. He soon abando
high road, struck into the fields, and scrambling ov
and fences, brought himself within hearing of the s
roared and dashed against the sands. But Allan kn
the shores of the Forth were studded with hamlets
tached cottages. He therefore took again to his ri
wandered on, avoiding every approach to human hal

The dawn of day found this wretched being far a
upon the wild and desolate tract of Lammermoor. H
was bare, for his hat had been lost in the deadly s
and his hair streamed loose in the blast, while his ga
besides being thoroughly saturated with water, w
vered from top to toe with mud. His strength, toc
to fail him, for he had walked all night, and the vio
his agonies tended to enfeeble the frame which ga
port to a mind so restless. He gazed around him
despair. It is true, that a consciousness of immed
curity accompanied the conviction that he was alo
that wide heath; for, as far as the eye could reac
living creature moved upon the surface of the moc
along with that consciousness came the considerati
safety obtained on such terms, could not be lasting.
demanded refreshment and repose; and hardy as
there went a chill through his veins which warned h
even his iron constitution might be tried too far. H
ened his pace, made for a stunted oak that crowned
eminence near, and sat down with his back to the v
in a state not far removed from exhaustion.

It is said that the criminal never sleeps so sound
sentence of death has been passed, as on the night pr
his execution. The philosopher will doubtless acc
the fact in his own way, attributing it either to the
consequences of a protracted wakefulness, or to the
ing and stupifying effect produced upon the mind by t
extinction of hope. We know not how far Allan'
were operated upon by one or other of these causes,
certain that he had not long sat under the tree, ere h
fell insensibly upon his shoulder, and a deep slumb
ne him. Not that even in his sleep the unhapp

experienced any relief from care. Terrible visions passed before the eye of his mind. The death-struggle was renewed—Hatfield mastered his arm—and then came the groan, the shiver, the flaccidity of muscle that spoke of life extinguished. Nor did the phantom end here. There was the gibbet, the gaping crowd, the horrid nightcap about to be drawn over the face—all these were presented to his sleeping fancy with the distinctness of reality. Allan shrieked aloud, and the sound of his own voice awoke him.

He opened his eyes, and beheld a man bending earnestly over him. In an instant he was on his feet, and though the sweat-drops still stood upon his brow, and his knees shook violently, he grasped in his bosom for the dirk, but it was gone.

"Yere sleep's no' very refreshing, friend," said the stranger, fixing a keen stare upon his face; "I jalouse your mind's but ill at ease. Where do ye come frae, and whither may ye be bound?"

The individual who thus addressed Allan was a short, thick-set man, with a complexion not much fairer than that of a Portuguese from the Alentejo; dark eyes, black hair, teeth remarkably white, and an expression of countenance that indicated, in very distinct terms, a ruffian of the lowest and meanest kind. His dress consisted of faded cord-breeches, tattered and unbuttonedat the knees—coarse gray worsted stockings, clouted shoes, a brown jacket, patched, yet pervious to every blast, and a ragged straw hat. A short black pipe was in one hand, which, from time to time, he raised to his mouth; and an enormous cudgel garnished the other. Finally, there hung at his side the sort of bag or wallet which beggars in Scotland were wont to carry about with them half a century ago, for the purpose of removing such amowses of oatmeal as the feuars or cotters might bestow upon them. Such was the individual who now confronted Allan with the air of determined impertinence, which a consciousness of surpassing bodily strength, and a suspicion that he has a superior at a disadvantage, never fails to throw into the manner of a blackguard.

Allan measured the querist from head to foot, as if calculating how a contest might end, should such be the issue of their meeting; and strong though the stranger seemed to be, the result of that review did not alarm him. He rallied his disordered intellects, and in his turn demanded to be informed how affairs, that concerned only himself, could possibly interest any one else. "And whence are you, friend? for I

greatly mistake the matter if you were on the moor at all five minutes ago."

"Five minutes ago," replied the gipsy, for there was no mistaking his caste. "'Od, man, I've been watching at your bed-side this quarter of an hour; and deil hae me if I envy ye what ye carry on your mind, be it what it may. Yere sleep's really fearfu' to look upon."

"And if I served you as your impertinence merits," replied Allan, "I should wring your neck where you stand. What right had you to disturb my repose?"

"There might be two that could play at that game," answered the gipsy, with perfect coolness, "forby that ane o' them might hae help at hand. But it's no' my nature to quarrel, and may be you have had enough o' quarrelling already. Ken ye that there's an ugly mark on your cheek?"

"What mark?" cried Allan, hastily, drawing his hand across his face, and speaking in great alarm: "I am not aware of any mark."

"Ne' then! look to your sark sleeve. What ca' ye that, [illegible] benna blude?"

Allan fairly started at the utterance of that terrible word. He cast his eye upon his wrist, and, sure enough, saw that the ruffles, though torn and crumpled by exposure to the weather, exhibited traces, too distinct, of the sanguine tide that had lately dyed them. This, as well as the rain, was entirely dried in, for the storm had passed away, and a bright April sun shone in the heavens; nevertheless, there was no mistaking the nature of the stream from which those dark spots had issued. He felt that to dissemble farther would be useless; that he was, in a great degree, in the power of the gipsy, and that he must either risk a second struggle for life and death, or endeavour to conciliate, where to provoke hostility would be madness. The idea of plunging more deeply into crime could not be entertained, and he therefore made up his mind to try the latter alternative.

"I will not deny that there is blood here," said he, "and that it is human. But it was shed in fair fight, and to preserve my own life. My dress, my appearance, the place in which you have found me, may all convince you that on account of that deed I am now a fugitive. The officers of the law are in pursuit of me, and I am spent with hunger and fatigue. If you can help me to food and shelter till the heat of pursuit is over, I will freely put myself under your protection, and you will one day find that, in affording these, you did yourself no harm. If, on the other hand, you make the slightest attempt to arrest or betray me—remember that

I am a desperate man, and desperate men seldom stop for trifles."

"I guessed as muckle," replied the gipsy; "I thought ye had been aboot some plisky o' that sort, for weel do I ken how the image o' a murdered man haunts the murderer in his dreams. Hoosever, that's no concern o' mine, and as to the laws and their offishers, trowth there's little in common between them and Joss Robison. So come yere way, and sic shelter and fire as I hae to give, yese be very welcome to. As ye're in trouble, Ise say nothing about payment just now; farther than that my chields are sometimes a wee dour to manage, and a Geordie or two divided among them might serve both your turn and mine—that is, supposing yere purse no' to be empty."

"Very fortunately, it is not," replied Allan, producing five guineas, and handing them to Robison. "I can spare these, and still retain a piece or two for my own use, in case I should require them; so that you may bribe where entreaties would fail. But where are your people?"

"Follow me, and yese ken ere lang," replied the gipsy, leading the way. Allan did so, and a short walk of perhaps three hundred yards carried him to the brink of a sort of pit, or shallow ravine, at the bottom of which stood three or four blanket-tents, pitched at short intervals one from the other. Round a couple of fires sat four women, apparently engaged in cooking, for pots hung suspended from cross sticks over the blaze, and saucepans simmered upon the embers; while groups of half-naked children were playing and rolling about in all the freedom of nature unrestrained. To complete the picture, there stood in the back-ground an empty cart or car, attached to which by a short chain lay a ferocious-looking bull-dog; while three donkeys, tethered by the fore-legs, were cropping the heads of the gorse-bushes along the sides of the hollow.

"Ye see I was no' sae far frae ye as ye supposed," observed Robison, as he pointed to his colony; "and forby that I am no' just a half-land's callant myself, ye wad hae found it a hard job to fight wi' thae randies. Holloa, Meg!" continued he, elevating his voice, "where's a' the lads? Hae they left ye, your clanes?"

A remarkably handsome female gipsy looked up at the well-known salutation, displaying a pair of dark, laughing eyes, features singularly regular, and an expression full of meaning, though it savoured strongly of the roguish. "'Deed hae they, Joss," answered she with an arch smile; "they's *aw abroad on their* travels, binna Jock Wilson, and he

likes better to sleep than to work, ye ken. But wha have you got there? I'm thinking little Jess wad speer his fortune, and no' seek to peer into the lines o' his hand."

"He's an unfortunate gentleman," replied Robison, who, with his companion, had by this time reached the settlement; "ane wha has broken the laws, as both you and me hae dune afore noo, and wants a hiding-hole. You're a good-natured quean, Meg; I'm sure you'll help to pit him beyond the reach of thae cursed messengers."

"Humph! that's no quite so certain, neither," replied the young woman, examining, apparently with no approving eye, the contour of his countenance. "Ane wad do muckle for a bonny callant, let his fauts be what they might; but for him—my certy, Joss, it needs all one's good-nature, and mair too, to gar tak interest in sic as him."

Allan bit his lip. Even his present desperate situation had not made him callous to wounds thus inflicted on his personal vanity, and old associations were aroused by it in a very distressing degree. But he placed so much restraint upon his feelings as to remain silent, while Robison answered for him. "Haud your tongue, Meg!" said the latter; ye're a wild rattle-brained cutty; though your heart's aye in the right place, fond as ye are o'hiding it. I tell you this young gentleman has been unfortunate, and there's blude on his hand that wad require his ain to be shed, if thae harpies of the law overtook him. Now, when I say this, I ken that I say enough to interest your good feelings in his favour. Stand up, then, and tell me what we're to do with him."

"Poor fallow!" said the young woman, rising and coming towards Allan, "I'm wae to hear that. I kenna what he can do, unless he cast in his lot wi' us; in whilk case he maun undergo the same treatment as ithers—auld Madge here will willingly prepare the dye, I'se warrant."

"I'm no' sure o' that," grumbled out an old shrivelled hag, whose attention appeared not to have been diverted one moment from the mess which she was preparing.

"No' sure of that, mother!" cried Robison; "by the ——, then, I am! so be pleased to make ready that blessed mixture of yours, and set to work upon his face and hands without delay. In the mean while," continued he, addressing himself to Allan, "the sooner you change your dress the better. A bare head and crumpled ruffles—no' to speak of dirty hose and a bloody cloak—are no' just the things for ane *that* wouldna be kenspeckle. If ye'll follow me, I dare say

we'll find a suit sich as ye can pit on, though, maybe, a thought coarser than ye're just used to."

Allan followed his conductor into one of the tents, stooping on his hands and knees that he might enter, and found it, altogether, such a domicile as his imagination had never till now devised. A quantity of straw covered what may be termed the floor; on either hand blankets were piled up with great regularity and neatness; while a bundle rolled together occupied the farther end, being deposited where the most perfect shelter from the weather was afforded. This Robison made haste to undo—and there were instantly scattered upon the ground garments of all shapes and fashions, adapted for the use alike of men and women. Here lay a silk coat, with waistcoat and breeches to match—a rapier, and other appendages connected with the garb of a gentleman; there a suit of the most homely habiliments, adapted for the wear of the lowest description of beggar. Beside these, were huddled together taffeta gowns and satin snoods, rough frieze cloaks and pinked farthingales, as well as brogues, high-heeled shoes, old straw hats, and embroidered petticoats. Robison, however, to whom this chaos appeared order, was not slow in choosing a dress for Allan, which he submitted to him as in every respect adapted to his present circumstances. It was such a suit as would be worn by one of the chiefs of the tinkler tribe—that is to say, though coarse and somewhat threadbare, it was at least whole; and Allan, conscious that it was impossible for him to change his present array for the worse, at once accepted it. In a few minutes, therefore, the metamorphosis was accomplished, and Allan went forth, no inappropriate personification of the very worst species of what is called a randy beggar.

Having thus reorganized his wardrobe, the women, at Robison's desire, proceeded to anoint Allan's hands, face, neck, and wrists with a wash, composed, as they informed him, of the juice of different herbs, among which the walnut was not omitted. The lotion occasioned a sort of tension of the pores, not unlike to what alum produces in the mouth, and the effect upon the respiration was, for a few minutes, exceedingly unpleasant. Nevertheless he was strictly prohibited from washing the parts anointed, or even touching them—so delicate was the dye, and so extremely nice the process, by which it penetrated under the surface of the skin. This done, they spread before him a repast of boiled ducks, onions, potatoes, and bread, of the whole of which he partook with *great avidity*; nor was the horn of whisky *forgotten, a beverage* of which the wandering mendicants

of the North generally take care to keep a plentiful supply. "And now," said Robison, as soon as Allan had concluded his meal, "let me advise you to go to sleep. There is a softer and a drier bed under that canvass than you had when I came upon you two hours ago. Rest yourself there, and recruit your strength; for we may shift our quarters ere night-fall."

Allan, on whom fatigue and anxiety had begun to tell, gladly acceded to this recommendation. He re-entered the tent, and stretching himself on the straw, with a blanket drawn over him, closed his eyes, and in spite of all the horrors which he had gone through, and the fearful anticipations arising out of them, slept soundly.

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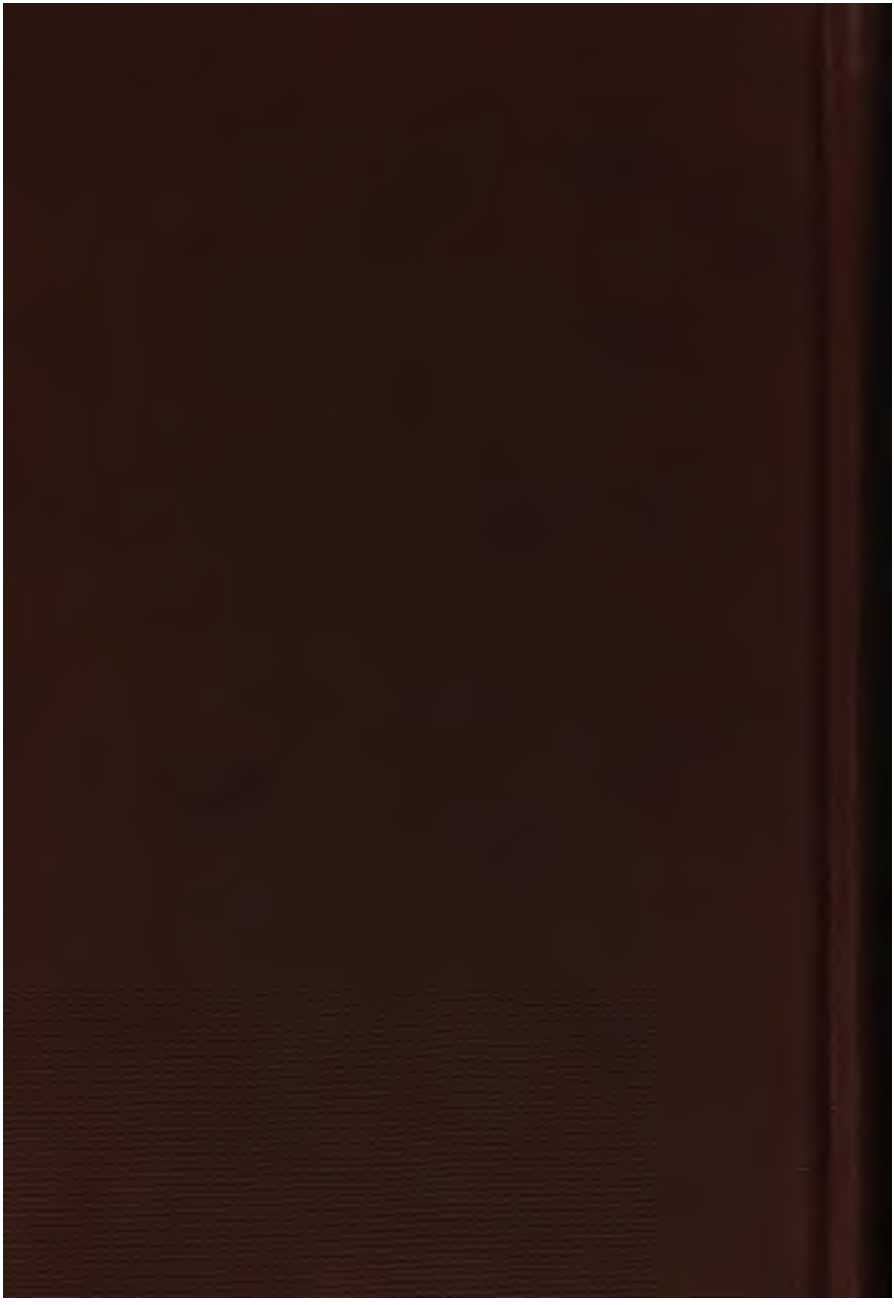
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